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Tony Blair visited the Fujitsu plant in his constituency with little more than words of sympathy to offer the 600 workers who face redundancy. Page 4

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28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION**Hamish McRae**

'George Soros has now lost a lot of money and when people lose money they tend to find it easier to blame the system than blame themselves.' Page 3

Paul Spike

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FORECAST

General atmosphere: Plenty of sunshine in Scotland with only a few showers in western and northern areas. A few more in Northern Ireland. The cloud will increase and thicken with rain breaking out during the afternoon. Eastern England may have a few showers but elsewhere in England and Wales will be mainly dry with sunny spells.

SE England, London, Midlands: Dry with long sunny spells. A light north-west wind. Max temp 17-19°C (63-66°F).

E Anglia, E Scotland: Sunny spells and the risk of a few showers, especially towards the end of the day. A light north-westerly wind. Max temp 16-18°C (59-63°F).

West S & W England, Channel Is, Wales: Dry with plenty of sunshine. A light north-westerly wind. Max temp 17-19°C (63-66°F).

Wales, NW England, Lakes Distr, Isle of Man: A slight risk of a shower or two, mainly dry with sunny spells. A light north-westerly wind. Max temp 16-18°C (61-64°F).

North & NE England: Sunny spells and the odd shower, especially towards the coast. A light north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-17°C (57-63°F).

N Ireland: Sunshine fading with thickening afternoon cloud bringing rain. A light north-easterly wind. Max temp 15-16°C (57-61°F).

SW, SE & NW Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh, W Isles: Dry with sunny spells. A light northerly later southerly wind. Max temp 14-16°C (57-61°F).

NE Scotland, Aberdeenshire: A few showers, mainly light. A light to moderate north-westerly wind. Max temp 11-14°C (52-57°F).

N Isles: Sunny spells and showers. A moderate north-westerly wind. Max temp 11-12°C (52-54°F).

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WE LEAVE EVERYONE STANDING UP

Serbia retreat is the latest in Cook's tour de farces

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels



Robin Cook in his office at the Foreign Office (Photograph: Dale Cherry), and (above left) in India last October during the Queen's tour

WHEN IT came, the climbdown was of breathtaking proportions. For days, beleaguered British officials had defended the UK's failure to implement a flight ban on Serbia because of legal niceties.

As Britain's isolation grew – Serb-friendly Greece was our only ally – the rhetoric hardened; how, ran the argument, could we expect countries to obey international law if we were breaking agreements?

All that began to change on Monday morning when Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary and architect of the "ethical dimension" to foreign policy, returned from his autumn break in France. Within hours Mr Cook and Tony Blair had spoken and concluded that Britain's stance was becoming unsustainable. Later, when the Prime Minister spoke to one of Britain's chief critics, Jacques Santer, the President of the European Commission, the die was cast.

That the Government should have changed tack is not surprising. As one ally said: "Robin certainly did not want to go to the Labour Party conference with this building up, and with Britain being practically the only state with direct daily air links to the 'Great Satan' (Slobodan Milosevic)."

What has caused bewilderment in European capitals is that the Foreign Office and Foreign Secretary could have been on such different courses.

It also shows the Foreign Office's lack of sensitivity with the situation on the ground in Kosovo where details are emerging of how troops under the com-

mand of Mr Milosevic have shot many ethnic Albanian civilians, and through a scorched-earth policy are fixing to let many more – hundreds of thousands – starve to death over the coming winter.

Pressure for Nato intervention is building among the western allies amid signs that the rhetoric about sanctions is having no effect.

The upshot of Britain's muddled foreign policy is that once again questions are being asked about Mr Cook's stewardship of his department, about his ability to reflect and act on his priorities. After a year dominated by bad news, over his marriage, the Queen's state visit to India and the Sandline "arms-to-Africa" affair, another row was just what Mr Cook could have done without. Part of this was bad luck. The

Foreign Secretary had worked through much of August and was on annual leave when the row over Serbian reprisals reached a climax. But even that shows a lack of a sure touch, because Mr Cook failed to attend one meeting at which the ban was discussed, the informal meeting of foreign ministers in Salzburg on 5 and 6 September. His decision to send Joyce Quinn, the new Europe minister, was much criticised by other foreign ministers who saw it as evidence of arrogance, but Mr Cook himself was probably the main loser. Had he been in Salzburg and detected the determination of other nations to press ahead with the flight ban, despite their legal problems, Britain would probably not have found itself in such a corner.

In the event the informal

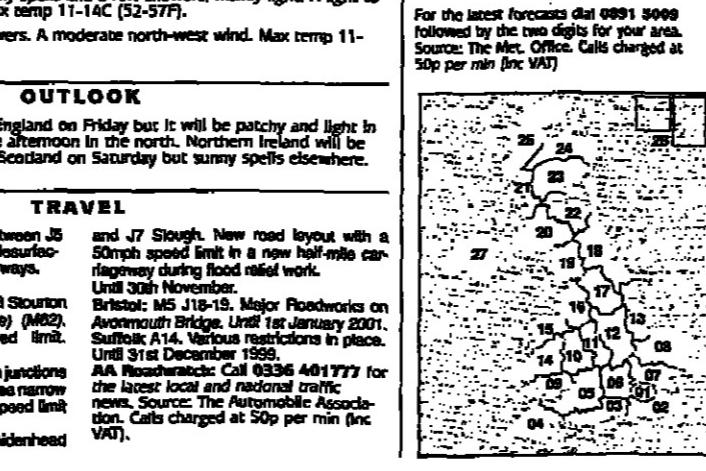
meeting was a lost opportunity. One insider said: "Nobody but nobody sees her as a latterday Castlereagh either. At those meetings you are surrounded by officials and junior ministers at the FCO tend not to open their mouths."

But familiar Foreign Office problems were about to re-emerge. From the start, Mr Cook's dismissal of the diary secretary, and his announcement of a new ethical dimension to foreign policy, the Foreign Secretary's relationship with his department has been uneasy. His attempts to reform the Foreign Office, to widen its recruitment and to create new sources of foreign policy advice, have caused resentment. He was politically damaged by his marriage break-up. Mr Cook's allies

began to suspect a low-level campaign of sniping by his own officials. Nor did the Sandline row, with the implication that some ministers had been poorly served by officials, improve internal cohesion. Here, if nothing else, was evidence of a divergence of thinking between minister and departments.

As with the Sandline case, the machinery at the Foreign Office was moving in a different direction. Because of a 1993 bilateral agreement with Yugoslavia on air services, Foreign Office lawyers argued that the ban – which had been agreed under the British presidency – could not be implemented until one year's notice had been given. At one level this reflects Britain's traditional diplomatic posture. As one official put it: "Britain has always been a stickler for the rules and this is a strength, not a weakness because it helps us to ensure that others stick to the rules too." But a legalistic fine on sanctions against President Milosevic ignored the words and sentiments of Mr Cook on the subject. It failed to appreciate the comfort that such public disarray in the EU would give to the Serbs.

As such it reflects the continuing differences between the Foreign Secretary and the government department he wished to modernise. As one ally of Mr Cook put it: "The Foreign Office is an institution which is used to imposing its pattern of thinking on ministers. Now it's confronted by ministers with ideas of their own. You can see the tensions which have not been fully worked out." None of which bodes well for Mr Cook.



National Year of Reading: Every baby to get a book as millions are put behind drive to raise levels of literacy

Britons urged to turn over a new leaf

MINISTERS WANT to turn Britain into a nation of readers - with the help of television. Soap operas such as *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street* and *Brookside* will be used to promote the idea that reading is both essential and fun.

Everyone, from nine-month-old babies to 80-year-old pensioners, will be invited to take part in the National Year of Reading, which David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, launched yesterday.

He said: "This is a campaign for everyone. It aims to encourage parents, grandparents and friends to read and to get children to read and it is also about getting volunteers to be prepared to give a little time as mentors, both in and out of school."

Older people will also be given a chance to brush up their reading. Mr Blunkett said his own interest in reading had begun with the "politically incorrect" Biggles stories and Enid Blyton's Famous Five.

Then he read Jack London's *White Fang* and *Call of the Wild*. "It was inspirational. I loved the poignancy of it and the way he portrayed the best and most cruel elements of nature," Mr Blunkett announced, an extra £2m of money to pay for a £1,000 book token for every school. It follows £22m for books made available in January. Nearly £60m will be spent on a new daily "literacy hour" in primary schools.

A £1.8m television advertising campaign to encourage adults to read to children began last night and will run until the end of October. Last night's advertisement showed fathers reading with their children and was broadcast to coincide with the European Champions League match between Manchester United and Barcelona.

The need for a national year

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

of reading is obvious, say ministers. In a recent survey Britain came third from the bottom in a literacy table of eight industrialised nations. According to the Office for National Statistics, 8.4 million Britons of working age (22 per cent) are incapable of comparing two pieces of information and one in four adults has very poor literacy standards.

Around 40 per cent of 11-year-olds are not reaching the expected standard in national tests in English. Particular efforts will be made to help boys, who lag behind girls in English throughout their school careers. Fathers will be encouraged to read with their sons and a month will be devoted to reading in sports, with the backing of Linford Christie and Alex Ferguson.

Parents will be able to obtain a free booklet of advice on how they can help their children to read by calling the freephone number 0808 100 50 60. Every baby will get a free book as part of a £5m project funded by Sainsbury's in partnership with the charity Book Trust. The company is giving away 1 million books in a new national Bookstart programme.

In a pilot project begun six years ago with 300 Birmingham families, babies were given free books at their nine-month health check. Both their literacy and numeracy had been improved by the time they started school. Two years after receiving the books they were three times more likely to be interested in reading than those who had not taken part.

Other projects will aim to influence young adults. One will promote cult novels for 16-to-25-year-olds. Estelle Morris, the school-standards minister, said

the improvement of literacy could not all be left to schools. "We need a culture change to make sure this country values reading in a way it has not done for many, many years."

Phil Redmond, executive producer of *Brookside*, said storylines including reading would feature in *Brookside*, *Holby* and *Grange Hill* during the year. He is keeping details secret but said a new family would be introduced into *Brookside* in November in which one member suffered from a reading disability.

The Conservatives attacked the use of soap operas. Peter Ainsworth, the culture spokesman, said: "This is an Orwellian nightmare which the viewer would find laughable and the licence-payer would reject as propaganda. What will we see next? *Coronation Street* used as a platform to promote the euro? *Brookside* as a vehicle for the New Deal?"

John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said the money was welcome and he expected schools would spend most of it on fiction for their libraries, which had been depleted by recent cuts. With discounts, that would mean about 200 new books for each school. "The challenge is to get children reading books in this age of computer games and wall-to-wall television."

Mr Blunkett said he would judge the success of the year by the shift in attitudes to reading. That might be measured by the number of books borrowed from libraries or sold in shops. Book sales had already risen since the Government began to highlight literacy problems, he added.

Leading article,
Review, page 3
Parents must teach reading,
Review, page 4

the improvement of literacy

could not all be left to schools. "We need a culture change to make sure this country values reading in a way it has not done for many, many years."

Phil Redmond, executive

producer of *Brookside*, said

storylines including



Fathers are to be encouraged to read with their sons, and a month will be devoted to reading in sports, with the help of stars Peter Byrne

The boy who preferred Shakespeare

ENCOURAGING schoolboys to enjoy their literary heritage has always been a vexing task. First, they used to prefer playing football. Then they started watching football. And now, they prefer reading football.

According to a straw poll of GCSE pupils at William Ellis, a north London boys' comprehensive, Thomas Hardy and George Eliot have no chance next to the England footballers Tony Adams and Ian Wright, both recent co-authors of their own autobiographies.

Needless to say, Wright does not feature on GCSE reading

feature on the reading list: "They are complicated, they are hard to understand and you can't see any connection to real life." But he is no philistine: asked what text he would choose given the freedom of a bookshop, he picked *Julius Caesar*.

Shakespeare is about jealousy and love and hate and violence, and people do exactly the same kind of thing today."

The "irrelevance" of some of the GCSE texts is not a generation gap thing, then, so much as a considered opinion. "Studying some of these books would put some people off the

idea of books full stop," said Steven. "I'm sure there are people who think, 'Well, these are all boring so books are boring'."

The others agreed: the age

of the GCSE texts was not a

problem in itself, and they knew

they were studying the literature as part of a learning process, not for enjoyment. "But I thought some of the short stories were meaningless," said Keir Kennedy – not like Shakespeare, where everything's very realistic even if the language is difficult."

The school lists have not

WHAT EVERY TEENAGER SHOULD BE READING



MICHELE ROBERTS,
NOVELIST AND POET:

- (1) *The Penguin Book of Women Poets*
- (2) *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- (3) *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë
- (4) *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys
- (5) *Collected Works* by Colette
- (6) *Poems* by John Donne
- (7) *Poems* by George Herbert
- (8) *Capital* by Karl Marx
- (9) *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud
- (10) *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis



ANDREW ROSENHEIM,
MD, PENGUIN PRESS

- (1) *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Mailer
- (2) *The Way of All Flesh* by Samuel Butler
- (3) *Money* by Martin Amis
- (4) *Going After Cacciato* by Tim O'Brien
- (5) *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- (6) *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- (7) *The Sporting Club* by Thomas McGuane
- (8) *Herzog* by Saul Bellow
- (9) *King Lear* by William Shakespeare
- (10) *The Power Broker* by Robert Caro



LISA JARDINE,
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

- (1) *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller
- (2) *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera
- (3) *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- (4) *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi
- (5) *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville
- (6) *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- (7) *The Man without Qualities* by Robert Musil
- (8) *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie
- (9) *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* by Jeanette Winterson
- (10) *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf



GEORGE WALDEN,
WRITER

- (1) *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
- (2) *Henry IV, parts 1 and 2* by William Shakespeare
- (3) *The Essays* by Michel de Montaigne
- (4) *The Defence of Poesy* by Sir Philip Sidney
- (5) *Civilisation of Renaissance in Italy* by Jakob Burckhardt
- (6) *An Enquiry of Human Understanding* by David Hume
- (7) *Loftus* by Vladimir Nabokov
- (8) *The Underground Man* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- (9) *Tristam Shandy* by Laurence Sterne
- (10) *The Bible*

Book you can read in the dark

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

FRAN MATTHEWS, a 24-year-old PR executive in London, likes novels. She is reading *Colin Bateman's Divorcing Jack* before she lapped up *The Angels of Russia* by Patricia Leroy. The difference was that she could read Leroy's book in the dark.

Ms Matthews is one of the first wave of Britons catching on to "electronic books", or "e-books", hand-held computers able to store hundreds of novels at once and designed to be read anywhere. Battery-powered and with a backlit screen, her 3Com PalmPilot is the start of a change that could affect both how we read books and how they get published.

"I suppose I might have looked weird reading it on the Underground, just sitting there,"



PalmPilot: online books

said Ms Matthews. "It felt weird reading in bed in the dark. But I can see it catching on." The principal difference she noticed about reading *The Angels of Russia*, which she received as an e-mail sent by the Web publisher Online Originals, was that she was never

sure how close she was to the last page. She still doesn't know if it was a long book.

"You get to the end of chapters, but it's hard to get a concept of where you are in the whole book. Actually, that added to the fun. Sometimes when you're reading a [paper] book you know you're getting to the end. With this it just finished. And I really liked it."

About 1.6 million PalmPilots have been sold, and more "e-books" will hit American shops within weeks, arriving in Britain next year. They are essentially stripped-down computers, idealised for reading text and graphics. Their displays are usually black and white and prices range from \$300 (£185) to \$1,500 (£940), weights start at 260g (0.5kg) and sizes as small as a paperback. For some paper-oriented publishers the dream of elec-

tronic books may prove a nightmare. Authors can sell directly to readers over the Internet, cutting out the middlemen of publishers, editors, printers, distributors and bookshops.

But one trail-blazer, Online Originals, a "virtual company" that exists only on a laptop computer and a Web site, acts as a publisher for first-time novelists. You can sample a book via its Website (www.onlineoriginals.com). For £4, you can buy the content of any words and pictures will be e-mailed as a file to be read on a normal PC or a PalmPilot.

The company's authors then receive half the book's purchase price, a clear advantage over the paper system, where a first-time author might never get any money, despite good sales. Most authors are given an advance only for their subsequent novels.



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Lawrence police errors 'deliberate'

SENIOR DETECTIVES deliberately undermined the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation to ensure the black teenager's racist killers were not brought to justice, the public inquiry was told yesterday.

In a final submission on behalf of the Lawrence family, Michael Mansfield, QC, said the investigation had also been blighted by "insidious racism" within the Metropolitan Police. "Racism lies at the heart of why Stephen was murdered and why his mur-

derers remain unconvicted," he said.

But the inference to be drawn from the number and magnitude of mistakes made by detectives was that they had colluded with the criminal father of one of the suspects to allow all five of them to evade prosecution, Mr Mansfield told the inquiry into Stephen's death, which resumed yesterday after a two-month break.

In a scathing address, he

accused several police witnesses of lying in their evidence to the inquiry. He reserved his harshest words for the three men who led the search for the gang that stabbed Stephen in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993 - Detective Chief Superintendent William Isley and Detective Superintendents Ian Crampton and Brian Weedon.

The approach of these highly experienced officers to fundamental investigative decisions was "representa-

ble", Mr Mansfield said. "The errors that were committed by all three of them are so substantial and so obvious that it is inconceivable that they were not recognised as such at the time. There is, therefore, only one sensible conclusion to be drawn. That they knew what they were doing and never intended effective arrests leading to conviction to be achieved."

Listing the links that had emerged between detectives and Clifford Norris, father of

David Norris, one of the suspects, Mr Mansfield said: "There is a matrix of quite exceptional coincidences and connections here which weave such a tight web around this investigation that only an ability to suspend disbelief can provide an innocent explana-

tion."

David Norris, Neil Acourt,

Jamie Acourt, Luke Knight and Gary Dohson have all been charged in the past with murdering Stephen. None of them has ever been convicted.

Mr Mansfield said there was abundant evidence that the three senior investigating officers conspired to conceal the truth, including the "astonishing and staggering disappearance" of virtually all police files and records connected with the case.

Their claim that they delayed arrests for two weeks in order to gather hard evidence was a "charade", he said, while a surveillance operation conducted outside the Acourts' home was a

"sham". But he said the clearest manifestation of dishonesty was found in detectives' handling of a key informant who was treated "as though he were dirt that had just walked in off the street".

He said the inquiry had uncovered numerous examples of racism, including the failure to administer first aid to Stephen and the "extraordinary unwillingness" to acknowledge that the attack had been racially motivated.

Mr Mansfield called on the

inquiry team, chaired by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, to recommend far-reaching reforms when it publishes its report early next year. "The scale of shortcomings in this case is so shocking that clear and radical recommendations followed by swift action are imperative," he said.

The inquiry continues today, with final submissions from other parties. It then moves into its second part, an examination of the lessons to learnt from the murder investigation.

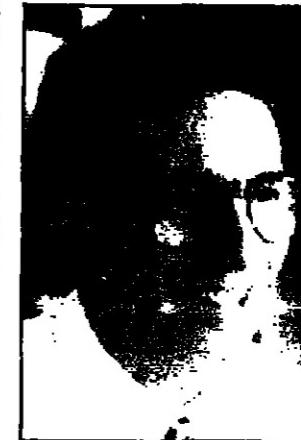


A dress from Linda Cierach's new autumn/winter collection being modelled yesterday in Kensington, west London

Kalpesh Lathigra

Radio 4 listeners want fewer quizzes

BY PAUL McCANN
Media Editor



James Boyle: Responding to feedback from listeners

RADIO 4 is to scrap some of its new lunchtime quizzes and bring back the 9am news bulletin after complaints from listeners about aspects of the station's five-month-old schedule.

The best of the quizzes and panel games will stay, but from the new year factual feature programmes will be run after the *World at One* two days a week. Radio 4 has broadcast a wide range of panel games at lunchtime trying to find what it calls "the new classics".

However, calls to the Radio 4 helpline, letters and e-mails have shown that programmes like *Mastermind*, *Puzzle Panel*, *Full Orchestra* and *X Marks the Spot* are too much for listeners when they are on five days a week.

Features on arts, music and rural subjects are being commissioned now to start broadcasting in January.

The 9am news bulletin immediately after the *Today* programme was scrapped when the new schedule was launched in April to try to carry more listeners through into the post-9am programmes. The station suffers from a massive switch-off after all its news programmes and the new schedule was designed to hold half of the station's 5 million audience that times in just for John Humphrys and *The Archers*.

Listeners had complained that a "landmark" in their morning routine had disappeared with the two-minute summary, a Radio 4 spokeswoman said.

The BBC chairman, Sir Christopher Bland, yesterday acknowledged that listening figures for parts of the schedule introduced in April were "a little disappointing", and Mr Boyle said it had yet to win universal approval.

Listening figures since the radical schedule changes have been mixed: audience numbers were up, but the hours of listening were slightly down.

They did indicate, however, that the audience for the half-hour quiz slot after the *World at One* programme has slumped by a fifth compared to the previous year when the *World at One* was longer and was followed by *The Archers*.

Sir Christopher said: "I think the interim figures are interesting but inconclusive. Some aspects of them were a little disappointing.

"We always said that judgment should not be short term, and the changes in the schedule wouldn't be a quick fix."

The next quarterly set of the industry's official Rajar listening figures would give a better idea of how it was settling down, he said at the launch of the BBC's latest "Statement of Promises".

Men fall for women who look like their mother

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

MEN ARE more likely to fall in love with women who look like their mothers according to a study showing for the first time that the Oedipus complex has some scientific basis.

Scientists have demonstrated that male sexual preferences are largely determined by maternal influences in the early years of life — in other words if a woman looks like a man's mother he is more likely to find her attractive.

The study based on observations of sheep and goats who were fostered by mothers from a different species but scientists believe the results could also be applied to human sexual preferences.

Ever since Sigmund Freud proposed that mothers have an inordinately strong influence over their sons, cemented by a

male lambs and kids developed a lifetime preference for females of the opposite species.

The researchers concluded: "We chose sheep and goats because they form close bonds between mothers and offspring, just like humans. They can also recognise each other by facial characteristics, again like humans," Dr Kendrick said.

When the fostered animals became adults the male sheep continued to prefer female goats and the male rams continued to prefer ewes even those both sets of males had mixed only with members of their own species for three years.

The female lambs and kids also showed a slight preference for males of their fostered species but this proclivity did not survive being brought up among their own kind — suggesting that women do not

share a biological preference for men who look like their fathers.

The researchers concluded: "The fact that male offspring are affected more than females, and apparently for life, is evidence that they are indeed more powerfully influenced by their mothers. This indirectly supports Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex."

Dr Kendrick said the results could not explain everything about why men ended up falling in love with their future partners, although he acknowledged that in his own case it may have played a contribution.

"My wife does have some similarities with my mother in her facial characteristics, although her hair and eye colour are not the same."

*Leading article,
Review, page 3*

Hague's £300,000 poll is a 'waste'

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

KENNETH CLARKE last night claimed the £300,000 being spent by William Hague on the party's referendum on the European single currency was a waste of money.

Barely hiding his contempt for the referendum, the former Chancellor told the Tory leader to "stop holding these back me or sack me" ballots.

He said Mr Hague's leadership was secure, and rumours that he was plotting against the leader had been created by Euro-sceptics to force Mr Hague into holding the ballot.

The former Chancellor's attack sparked an angry response from Tory Central Office, which accused Mr Clarke of being out of touch with the membership of the party.

The row over Mr Hague's referendum on the European single currency is now certain to overshadow next month's

Alzheimer's link to older fathers

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

CHILDREN BORN to fathers who are approaching middle age have a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease in later life, a study suggests.

A retrospective investigation of 206 people who have the degenerative illness, but no history of it occurring in the family, revealed a statistically significant link with the age of their father when they were born.

Some genes are known to contribute to the chance of developing Alzheimer's, but the new study, carried out by Lars Bertram at the Technical University of Munich, suggests that simply having an older father — average age 35.7 — can be a risk factor even in the absence of those genes. For those where there was a family history of Alzheimer's, the average age of the father was 31.3 years.

Similar effects are already known to occur in women, where mothers over 35 have a far higher chance of giving birth to babies with Down's syndrome, which is caused by a genetic defect in the embryo. People with Down's syndrome are also more likely eventually to develop Alzheimer's.

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A pint of McMullen Special Reserve is pulled at yesterday's beer launch by north London rugby club Saracens

Paedophiles 'assaulted 300 children'

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

SCOTLAND YARD revealed last night that paedophiles who infiltrated a breakaway scout association have sexually assaulted up to 300 children over the past 30 years in one of the worst cases of abuse ever uncovered in Britain.

Detectors, who are still investigating, believe that the paedophile ring has been operating since the early Sixties. Some of their victims have been as young as eight.

Details of the mass child abuse were released yesterday at the end of a series of trials and hearings involving scoutmasters.

Some had conspired with Brian Turner, 60, a notorious paedophile associate of Sydney Cooke, who was jailed for the manslaughter of 14-year-old boy Jason Swift.

To the scoutmasters, Turner was known as the "chicken-

mitted child sex charges. Police disclosed that at least 10 other suspected members of the ring are still under investigation. They include teachers and social workers.

Five police forces are involved in the inquiry, which involves alleged sex offences against hundreds of children, mostly boys.

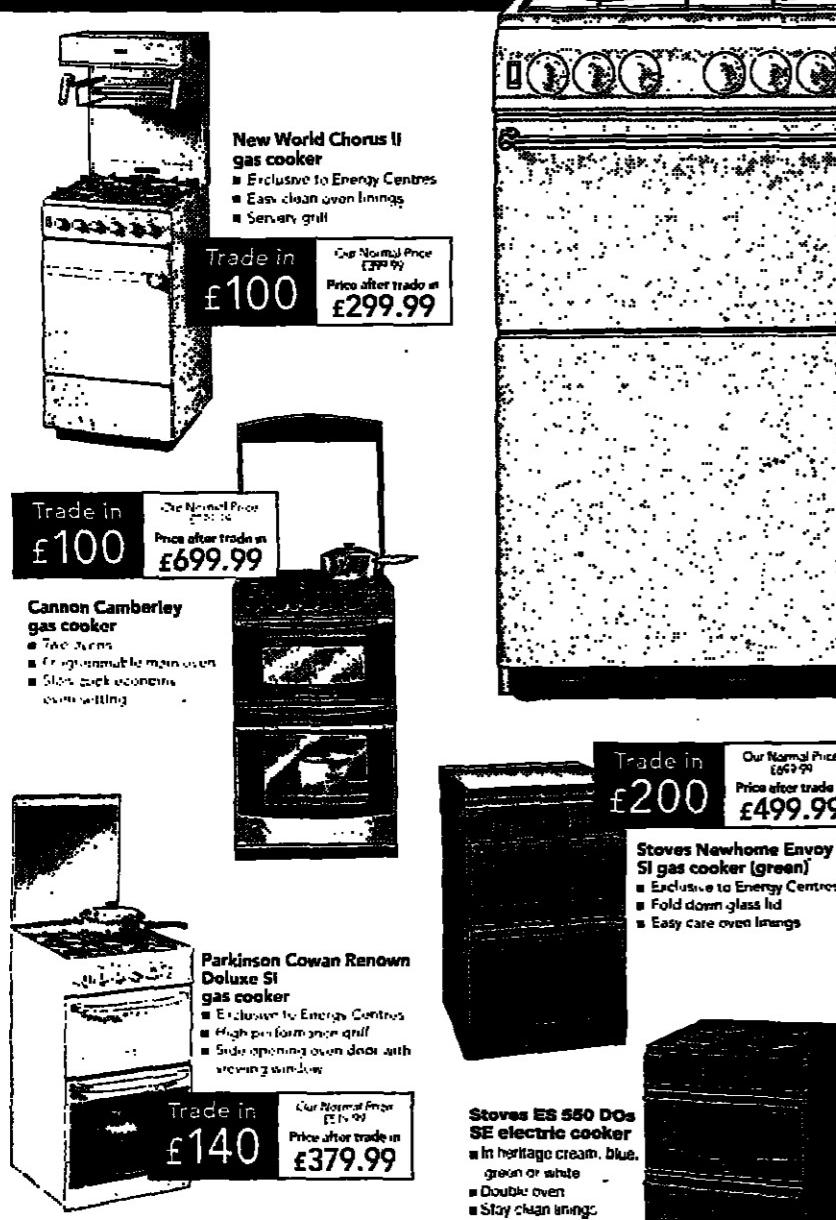
Spratt, who held a senior position in the association, is listed on the Internet as the editor of the Baden-Powell Scouts' news-sheet. Kearns was the assistant editor.

Spratt, of Bracknell, Berks, and Kearns, from west London, both pleaded guilty earlier this month to conspiracy to commit indecent assault between October 1995 and September 1997.

The pair were jailed last February at London's Southwark Crown Court for other offences involving scouts. Kearns was sentenced to two and half years and Spratt was given 12 months.

Officers found a vast library of child pornography, 14,000 negatives and 350 videos at Kearns' home. The photographs were of 52 boys, most of whom have yet to be traced.

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Standards planned for UK degrees

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

THE FIRST nationally-regulated standards for university degrees could be in place as early as next year, vice-chancellors said yesterday.

University heads meeting in Manchester overwhelming voted to establish "programme specifications" governing the content and quality of all undergraduate courses.

The first national standards could be piloted in Wales and Scotland next year, with the system extending across Britain by 2001. The move marks a profound shift for universities, which have always jealously guarded their right to set degree standards.

Yesterday the committee of vice-chancellors and principals rejected claims that the new standards represented a national curriculum for degrees and said they would safeguard standards for all students.

Student leaders said the move would help ensure that people paying the new £1,000 a year university tuition fees got value for money.

Under the proposals, to be discussed tomorrow by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, academics will draw up broad specifications for each of the hundreds of subjects taught in universities.

The standards will show the areas graduates will be expected to cover, and lay out the depth of knowledge they must gain. The quality of individual courses will be measured against national standards.

Specifications will be set by academics working with the Quality Assurance Agency, the quango monitoring the quality of university teaching. Work on the first subjects, chemistry, history and law, has started.

A system of "academic reviewers" - effectively lecturers acting as expert inspectors - will oversee the traditional system of external examiners who ensure standards are maintained.

The proposals, expected to be approved by the English, Welsh and Scottish funding council within weeks, have been extensively revised.

Jim Gardner, vice-president of the National Union of Students, said: "It's not a national curriculum. It's trying to ensure that a degree from Bognor is the same as a degree from the Ivy League."

Professor Ivor Crewe, vice-chancellor of Essex University, said: "This is generally supported because it shifts the emphasis towards standards but does not impose a grotesquely heavy burden on universities."

Drug smuggler fined £1million

BY PAUL LASHMAR

Scotland Yard. The squad was set up to tackle drug-related organised crime.

The Adams family are believed to control a multi-million-pound drug-dealing empire in London and Spain. They have been suspected of gangland murders, gun-running and money-laundering. The family is also said to have had police officers and a Conservative MP in their pay.

Papamichael was sentenced to six years and ordered to pay £70,000. Wilkinson was jailed for nine years for the conspiracy and possessing a revolver. He was ordered to pay £30,000. A fourth man, Christos Tsakouris, 43, skipped bail. He is believed to be back in Cyprus.

Tommy Adams came from a council flat on the notorious Paddington Estate in Islington, North London. Now he owns a £100,000 town house in nearby King's Cross.

A POWERFUL blow against Britain's most notorious crime gang - the Adams family - was struck yesterday when a leading member was jailed for masterminding a huge drugs-smuggling operation.

Sean "Tommy" Adams, 40, from north London admitted conspiracy to supply cannabis and was sentenced to seven and half years. He was also ordered to pay him within one year or serve an extra five-year sentence. He laughed as he left the dock.

Judge Michael Carroll told Woolwich Crown Court that Adams, and his lieutenants, Michael Papamichael, and Edward Wilkinson, both 40, had run an illicit operation of considerable magnitude.

The gang had been accused of supplying cannabis worth £2m, importing the drug in three-ton loads.

The jailing of Adams and his aides is a major success for the National Crime Squad, based at

© British Gas 2000. 1998 © Eng. Stoves, Paragon (UK) which ends 25 September 1998. All products, by order of delivery, will receive full credit and repayments for delivery, assembly and installation are available for all domestic heating installations. *On New Year's Day 2000, customers subject to 20% deposit after signing a 10% deposit and then paying £100 by 1 January 2000. You can then make a full payment on delivery date or by instalments or otherwise than the interest will be charged at 12% p.a. or 32% p.a. from the date of the agreement. Interest on purchases will be charged from British Gas Energy Services Dept. CO. PO Box 99, Weybridge, Surrey KT10 1JD. Typical credit example: Customer borrows £1,000 at 12% p.a. APR 12%. Total amount payable £1,045.04 APR 12%. Risk in store for details. Price Pledge may not be used in conjunction with breakdown offers.

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THE INDEPENDENT
Thursday 17 September 1998

HOME NEWS/7

Air traffic system is £86m over budget

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

THE GOVERNMENT'S spending watchdog may be asked to investigate an £87m surge in costs for a computerised air traffic control system struck by a catalogue of failures.

National Air Traffic Services (NATS), which owns and runs the planned new control centre at Swanwick in Hampshire, has paid an American aerospace giant £216.7m - 75 per cent more than a £130m fixed-price contract signed in 1992.

The figure is also £54m more than the £163m costs reported by the Commons Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee in March.

Lockheed Martin delivered the completed system, designed to relieve pressure on air traffic control staff, to NATS in April. Staff supervise more than 4 million aircraft movements from premises at West Drayton, west London.

Gwyneth Dunwoody, chairman of the Commons transport sub-committee, said yesterday she might refer the NATS contracts to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the spending watchdog after she investigated the figures, reported today in the IT industry magazine Computer Weekly.

"The whole of this will bear close examination by the PAC because there are some very straight questions that we have been asking and we want to receive straight answers."

"The [transport] committee will have a lot of questions about costs, about implications and about the efficiency of the contractors," she said.

The sub-committee takes evidence from the NATS and the Civil Aviation Authority, its

parent body, on 28 October. In April the Environment, Transport and the Regions Committee said it had been told by NATS that the computer system would cost £163m out of a total cost of £339m. The NATS annual report for 1997-98 reveals that the organisation paid £216.9m.

Neither Lockheed Martin nor the Civil Aviation Authority was available for comment yesterday. But it is understood NATS will say the £130m was intended as the amount to be funded through a capital budget rather than a revenue budget.

The news of the rising costs is the latest blow to the Swanwick centre. A series of failures has forced senior managers to admit that the new centre, originally scheduled to open in 1996, now faces a struggle to open by the winter of 1999.

The Government announced in June that it plans to partly privatise NATS with private investors, including air traffic employees, taking a 51 per cent stake in the service with the Government holding 49 per cent.

In the same month, ministers said they would investigate the computer software problems. The investigation would also look at the pressure which controllers are under at the existing centre at West Drayton.

Some controllers have complained that the airspace is so crowded that it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a safe separation between aircraft.

PLANS FOR an army of "millennium volunteers" to revitalise sink estates and cut crime have become mired in controversy after the failure of attempts to recruit an unpaid chairman for the project.

Tony Blair is now expected formally to launch the national scheme this autumn. It will be run by civil servants after national advertisements did not produce a suitable figure willing to do the job without pay.

Despite £15m start-up funding from the windfall tax and the programme was the brainchild of David Blunkett,

BY FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

repeated assertions that the project was a permanent one, voluntary groups were shocked to be told at a recent meeting that they must seek their own funds after two years.

Some have also complained that they cannot run schemes for the money they are being offered - a maximum of £50,000 a year for two years.

Secretary of State for Education and Employment, and the groups say both he and his junior minister Margaret Hodge are deeply committed to it. But some groups are now accusing civil servants of hijacking it and watering down its aims.

Advertisements for a millennium volunteers chairman brought only 35 applicants and none was deemed suitable. It has been reported that Victor Adebowale, director of the Centrepoint charity for homeless people, and John Baker,

chairman of National Power, were approached but turned down the post.

Now it will be run from a unit in the Department for Education and Employment that is being headed temporarily by Chris Wells, formerly in charge of the department's millennium projects.

Mr Blair is expected to launch nine pilot projects for which contracts have been let, ranging from community service volunteers schemes in Sunderland and Southwark,

south London, to a British Trust for Conservation Volunteers programme in Exeter.

Community service volunteers in Southwark are helping to raise reading levels in schools, working in parks and helping police with crime prevention.

Elizabeth Hoodless, executive director of community service volunteers, has written to Mrs Hodge asking for help after being told that government funding will not meet the £80,000 annual cost of its programme. Others complained that a good idea

Cleaner
will
flow the
Don

BY MICHAEL McCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

A TREATMENT PLANT opens today for what may be Britain's most polluted stretch of river. The River Don in South Yorkshire is a pristine trout stream complete with kingfisher when it emerges from its source in a reservoir. When it reaches Penistone, six miles downstream, it turns orange.

Drain water from a coal mine abandoned in 1918 is the culprit. The mine is full of lurid iron deposits which are deadly to river life. No insect, plant or fish can survive in the stretch of the river which flows on to Sheffield.

The £1.2m treatment plant will take the polluted water - a million gallons a day - into a lagoon where it will be cleaned and pumped back. Research is continuing to find a use for the iron residue. It may be used as a colourant for bricks.

The Environment Agency has joined with Yorkshire Water, the Coal Authority, a local building firm and Barnsley Council to develop the project. Half of the funding came from Europe.



The river Don, at Penistone, in Yorkshire, turned orange by pollution from a disused coal mine

Kippa Matthews

Volunteer scheme runs into trouble



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M&S poses UK jobs threat

EMPLOYMENT
By BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

MARKS & SPENCER is in danger of turning into "Marks & Sharks" for urging its suppliers to make more of their goods abroad to keep costs and prices down, a delegate warned the TUC Congress yesterday.

Because the company set the benchmark for other retailers, up to 100,000 jobs were at risk, said Sheila Bearcroft of the GMB general union.

The company used to boast that 90 per cent of its goods were British-made. But now, Ms Bearcroft said, the proportion had dropped to 70 per cent and was set to decline further now that the retailer had told its 15 top suppliers that they may have to use more cheap, foreign labour. "Marks & Spencer is rightly famous for selling quality British goods. It will rightly be called Marks & Sharks if it sells British jobs down the river," she said.

A spokesman for the retailer said it was essential that suppliers remained "profitable and progressive". "If we allowed M&S to become less competitive then the impact on the British clothing and textile industry really would be disastrous."



Sheila Bearcroft holding a blow-up shark as she accuses M&S of putting profits before jobs Owen Humphries

Unions fight over Britain joining euro

A ROW OVER Britain's potential entry to the European single currency erupted at the TUC yesterday with leaders of the country's biggest unions warning that scrapping the pound would lead to soaring unemployment.

The deep divisions within the union movement were laid bare as both supporters and opponents of the euro attacked the Government's "wait and see" stance on membership of the economic and monetary union.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, told the conference in Blackpool that a decision to join the euro would boost the economy with cuts in interest rates in the long-term and called on the Prime Minister to give clearer leadership on early entry to the monetary union.

However, Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, voiced the concern of an increasing number of unions that the nation was "sleep-walking" into a single currency and warned that the European Central Bank would impose an

SINGLE CURRENCY

By PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

even tighter anti-inflationary straitjacket than that imposed by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

Mr Morris said unions had been told to keep quiet in recent years about their fears over the euro because they would damage Labour's election prospects, but debate could no longer be avoided.

To loud applause, he called on the TUC leadership to hold an emergency conference before any referendum on joining the single currency to allow all union members to consider its impact on their jobs.

The experience of last few years show that full employment and the single currency do not mix," he said. "In the rush to meet the Maastricht criteria, unemployment across Europe has continued to rise.

"If you think the Monetary Policy Committee is invisible and democratically unaccountable you ain't seen nothing yet. Wait till you meet the European Central Bank - at least you know what Eddie George looks like."

Britain's two biggest unions, Unison and the TGWU, both oppose Britain becoming a member of the single currency and overwhelming.

are backed by several smaller unions in their claim that it would cost jobs, cut wages and lead to a crippling squeeze on public spending.

Doug Nicholls, general secretary of the Community and Youth Workers Union, called economic and monetary union a "hostile takeover" of the British economy.

Mr Morris said he accepted that many unions had doubts about monetary union but it was clear that the euro could be a bulwark of stability in a world reeling from economic turmoil.

"Staying out in the cold for the time being will look less and less attractive as we see the effects of the UK being excluded from the European Central Bank and the euro group of finance ministers," he said.

He was given strong support by Ken Jackson, general secretary of the electricians and engineers union, AEEU, who said that opponents of the euro were "flat-earthers" who failed to see that large sections of manufacturing could transfer from Britain to a cheaper and more stable Europe.

Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, urged delegates to back his campaign to pull Britain out of the European Union. However, the conference rejected his amendment

Mandelson under fire on bonuses

PETER MANDELSON will today come under pressure on a series of controversial issues including Post Office privatisation and "fat cat" salaries at the Millennium Dome.

Mr Mandelson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, will be urged by delegates at the congress to clarify government plans for private sector involvement in the Post Office.

It is understood that there is a cabinet rift over the organisation, with Mr Mandelson favouring the sell-off of some shares and other ministers insisting that it remain under government ownership. The completion of a review has been postponed several times.

Derek Hodgson, leader of the Communication Workers' Union, pointed to a pre-election promise from Tony Blair that the organisation would not be privatised. "We in the CWU worked hard with the Labour Party to ensure that a change of government came about. And we expect previous promises to be kept," he said.

Mr Mandelson faces further embarrassment after leaders of the TGWU and Unison, Britain's two biggest unions, seized on revelations in *The Independent* that three directors of the Millennium Dome were to receive huge bonuses.

In anticipation of a cool response, the minister, regarded as one of the union movement's principal enemies in the Cabinet, will arrive on the platform with Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who is guaranteed a rapturous reception.

Ministers yesterday made clear that there would be no wholesale sell-off of the Post Office, but union leaders will

TODAY'S BUSINESS

- Debates on globalisation, Trident, child labour and the Irish peace agreement.
- Address by Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland Secretary, on progress on the Good Friday agreement.
- Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, speaks on the Government's proposals for fairness at work - followed by motions on TUC finances and organisation.

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Diners at the restaurant of the new Tate at Bankside will have a view of famous landmarks, including St Paul's

Andrew Buurman

Hockney and Hirst set for Tate

PICASSO, DAVID Hockney and Damien Hirst will be among artists given pride of place in the Tate Gallery of Modern Art, it emerged yesterday. Visitors to the £150m converted power-station will be able to arrive by boat: a minister said a service would link the new Tate at Bankside, the Tate Gallery at Millbank and the Millennium Dome at Greenwich.

The gallery, due to open in May 2000, will be Britain's first national modern-art gallery and will show 20th-century works with the Tate Gallery at Millbank devoted to a history of British art.

Lars Nittve, the Swede who will run the modern-art gallery under the overall Tate director, Nicholas Serota, was present yesterday at a topping-out ceremony at Bankside. He said discussions were continuing over

BY DAVID LISTER
Art News Editor

which works would be displayed. They would be a mixture of 20th-century art from the Tate Collection and new commissions. But the new gallery would certainly contain a room devoted to the American abstract expressionist, Mark Rothko. Giacometti and Brancusi will also be exhibited.

Among individual paintings to be displayed will be David Hockney's *A Bigger Splash* and Picasso's *Three Dancers*. "The Picasso is one of the five major Picasso paintings in the world," said Mr Nittve. "It's an extraordinary painting. If you want to make your dream exhibition, then it must be in it."

He added that the current crop of young British artists



Hockney and Picasso masterpieces will be among the works on display at the Bankside

would be represented, with Hirst certain to be there, though it was not known which of his works would be on display.

The conversion of the power-station includes a glass structure running the length of the building that provides natural light and gives views of St Paul's Cathedral and beyond across London. Visitors enter-

ing the building go into the vast former turbine hall, which will give space for large art installations. The main galleries for works of art will be arranged on three of the seven levels, with a restaurant on the roof.

Mr Serota said: "The Tate Gallery of Modern Art is already beginning to change London's skyline. It is our belief that

it will also change people's horizon on the future. We have maintained a steady course and are confident that we will meet both our timetable and our budget."

Nick Raynsford, minister for London, who was at the topping-out yesterday, said: "The impressive but redundant power-station is being transformed into a vibrant gallery which will, I am sure, become a jewel in the crown of London's reiving south bank." He added that a riverboat service would by the year 2000 be taking visitors to and from Bankside and would stop at the Tate at Millbank, where a pier has yet to be built.

The original power-station designed by Giles Gilbert Scott is being transformed into the modern-art gallery by Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron.

Coming soon - city centre cinema boom

IN A spate of cinema-building unprecedented since the war, more than 500 new screens are to be built in Britain in the next four years, bringing the total to more than 2,500 - the highest since the mid-Sixties.

The Australian-based firm Hoyts plans 150 screens with in the next four years at 15 multiplex centres.

It has already identified sites in London, Liverpool and Wolverhampton and its first multiplex site at Dartford, Kent, is due to be completed next summer.

Clearly, more than a century after William T Rock first charged customers 10 cents to watch a flickering moving image at the Vitascope Hall in New Orleans, the magical lure of the cinema remains strong.

"We certainly believe there is a lot of potential in the market in Britain," said a spokeswoman for Hoyts yesterday. "The cost of opening cinemas in Britain is higher than elsewhere so we have to be pretty confident. We believe that the multiplex approach, where there are cafés and restaurants at suitable sites will continue to be a draw."

"And we do believe there is still room for a lot of growth."

Odeon Cinemas, a division of Rank Leisure, and the largest chain in Britain with 77 theatres (more people went to an Odeon cinema last year than to a professional football match) is also planning to open a number of new theatres. It is opening five multiplex sites this year with a further 25 over the next five years.

The company is spending millions of pounds refurbishing its cinemas, many of which are in the high street. It believes the

person each year.

This would still be a fraction of those who flocked to cinemas in their heyday, however. In 1946, people averaged 34 visits a year; at a time when there was not the competition from clubs, televisions, computer games and other home-based entertainment.

The revival of the cinema industry in Britain has been attributed to investment in the theatres, better marketing and the development of US-style multiplex sites, the first of which opened in 1985.

These sites now account for 50 per cent of all visits. Better seats, easier parking and more films have all helped to boost attendances from a record annual low of 54m in 1984.

Yet some believe the film industry has also helped itself. Adam Smith, features editor of Empire magazine, said: "I think the industry has done a lot in recent years to try to improve the situation."

"Nowadays we have certain blockbuster films which everyone feels they have to go and see."

"The best recent example of that was Titanic, which people felt they had to see if they were not going to be left out of conversations with their friends. Fifteen or 20 years ago, given a few exceptions with films such as Star Wars, that was not the case."

"The marketing of films is much more professional and it is increasingly aimed at the teenage market, particularly the boys."

"The industry is still very, very strong and it will continue to be as long as it can still deliver a good night out with films people want to see."

FILM FIGURES

Year	Number of cinema screens	Total admissions
1946	4,600	1.64bn
1950	4,583	1.39bn
1960	3,034	500m
1965	1,971	32.6m
1970	1,529	193m
1984	1,275	54m
1997	2,349	139m

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Mother tells of 'botched operation'

A WOMAN spoke yesterday of her shock and devastation when she discovered that her ovaries had been removed without her permission during a hysterectomy.

The patient, aged 54, said the operation left her with bleeding and a leaking bowel for weeks afterwards. It was carried out by Rodney Ledward, a gynaecologist, at St Saviour's private hospital in Rythe, Kent. Identified only as Patient

Four, she told a General Medical Council disciplinary hearing against Mr Ledward that five weeks before the operation in November 1992 she was told her ovaries were "perfectly healthy". But from a conversation with the doctor after Christmas that year, "it dawned on me the way he was talking everything had been removed", she said.

Asked if she had contem-

plated or agreed to the removal of the ovaries, she said: "No, not at all."

The hearing was told that Mr Ledward, 58, who is accused of "serious professional misconduct" over alleged blunders involving 14 women, performed the hysterectomy so badly that two litres of blood had to be removed from Patient Four's stomach and abdomen.

The woman, who has four children, said she remembered

coming round from the operation "quite alarmed" to find a doctor pumping blood from her stomach.

The complications of the operation cleared up after nine days in hospital. Patient Four said, and she went home. But after a few days she discovered she was leaking urine in a constant trickle, and was readmitted to hospital.

It emerged that during the operation Mr Ledward had

damaged her ureter - the tube leading from the kidneys to the bladder.

"I was very, very distressed going back into hospital," she said. "I didn't know what was happening. I was told I had to come in for kidney failure, which was very frightening."

Mr Ledward, of Folkestone, Kent, denies 14 counts of misconduct. He was suspended from his post with South Kent Hospital's NHS Trust on 6 Feb-

ruary 1996, after a complaint from a patient. Last December, after an independent review, he was sacked for misconduct.

Robert Seabrook QC, for Mr Ledward, told Patient Four that the gynaecologist had "great sympathy" for the problems she encountered and pointed out she had had a good relationship with him in the past, which she acknowledged.

Asked by Mr Seabrook whether she would have trust-

ed his client's judgement in advising her that her ovaries should be removed, to prevent complications before the onset of the menopause, she said: "I would have considered it, but I never had that conversation."

Patient Four consulted a solicitor six months after the operation. Her claim for damages was settled in 1995.

Mr Ledward has 33 years of professional experience and is a published authority on drug

treatment in gynaecology and obstetrics.

Fourteen women are alleged to have suffered because of his incompetence while he was working at the William Harvey NHS Hospital, Ashford, Kent, and St Saviour's between 1988 and 1996. It is also claimed that he tried to persuade NHS patients to opt for private care for his personal gain.

The hearing is expected to last another seven days.



Visitors to The Vyne, near Sherborne St John, in Hampshire, the ancestral home of the Chute family, during the National Trust's open day

Glyn Griffiths

Epidurals in labour denied

NEW MOTHERS throughout the country are being routinely discharged hours after giving birth, and their requests for pain-killing drugs during labour are being denied, the Royal College of Midwives said yesterday.

The case of a mother who was discharged from St Michael's Hospital in Bristol six hours after giving birth was not unusual, it said. Pain-killing

epidurals were being refused on request, and given only in emergencies.

Anne Jackson-Baker, the director, said: "St Michael's is unusual because they are being upfront about it. But it is happening at many hospitals throughout the country, because of staff shortages.

If a mother wants to go

home after a short time, she should. But many are going home to shared accommodation, and awful bathroom facilities, and it could be too soon.

What is worse is that nervous mothers, who fear they will not be able to cope with the pain of childbirth, are not being given the option of having an epidural. That is because one-to-one care is needed and, because there are too few midwives, they cannot have it.

The United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust sent a letter to expectant mothers, explaining that lack of staff meant epidurals could not be administered on request, and that if a mother felt able, she could be discharged within six hours of giving birth.

The Royal College of Midwives said staff shortages were

particularly bad in the South and South-west.

There are 32,803 midwives in the UK, 2,500 fewer than two years ago, according to the United Kingdom Central Council register. The shortage is more acute because more midwives are working part time.

The Department of Health said it understood that mothers were not forced to go home, but did so only if they felt able. A spokesman said: "If it is considered clinically safe and the mother wants to go home, then we agree. But the mother has to be happy with the situation."

Alan Duncan, Conservative health spokesman, said: "Labour has already proved a let-down for our health service. Now they are letting down new mothers as well."

THE FOLKESTONE RACE COURSE PLC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company will be held at the offices of Macdonald Graham & Jones, 110 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6AJ, on 20 October 1998, at 11.00hrs, for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, passing the following resolutions as special resolutions.

1. That all future acts or purported acts of the Company prior to the passing of this resolution, including for avoidance of doubt, the appointment of its current directors, be and are hereby adopted, approved and ratified.

2. That the articles of association be and are hereby altered and amended by the insertion of a new article 6A (the "Unreasonable Members" article).

3. That the Company may sell any shares in the company on behalf of the holder of, or person entitled by transmission to, the shares. Arco Leisure plc at a price of £0.50 per share, and the price of £0.50 per share to be paid by the Directors the net price reasonably obtainable for the shares if and provided that:

(1) the member did not apply for any shares in the rights issue by the company set out in a circular dated 28th March 1997, offering Ordinary Shares at a price of £3.50 for each Ordinary Share and for each Ordinary Share to be held by the Company from the member or the person entitled by transmission since 28th March 1997; and

(2) the company has after the expiration of the said period of 7 years from 28th March 1991 by advertisement in both a national daily newspaper published in the United Kingdom and one local newspaper published in the Folkestone area given notice of its intention to do so.

4. That the company has during the further period of 63 clear days after the date of the advertisement and prior to the exercise of the power of sale received any communication from the member or person entitled by transmission:

(a) to the title to the shares as affected by any irregularity in the documents, upon these relating to the sale; (b) to the title to the shares as affected by any irregularity in the documents relating to the company becoming indebted to the former holder of, or person entitled by transmission to, the shares for an amount equal to the net proceeds. No trust shall be created in respect of the debt and no interest shall be payable in respect of it and the company shall not be required to account for any monies received from the net proceeds which may be employed in the business of the company or in its books;

5. That the notice be given in the following form:

6A. Any notice to be given by the company to the members of any class, and notice provided for by or pursuant to these articles or not being capable of being given in accordance with these articles, shall be sufficiently given by advertisement in one national daily newspaper published in the United Kingdom and one local newspaper published in the Folkestone area.

7. That article 30.4 be and is hereby amended by the addition of the following words after the first sentence:

"A notice given by advertisement shall be deemed to have been served on the day on which the advertisement appears. Where there is more than one advertisement of the notice, the notice shall be deemed to have been served on the day on which the latest advertisement appears."

8. That article 1.1.1 of the articles of association of the Company 1.1.1. hereby amended by the deletion of the word "PLC" and 1.1.1. word "Limited".

9. That article 1.1.1. by the deletion of clause 2, and

(a) by renumbering clauses 3 to 6 as clause 2 to 5 respectively.

10. That article 1.1.1. of the articles of association of the Company 1.1.1. hereby amended by the deletion of the word "PLC" and 1.1.1. word "Limited".

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Notes:

1. A member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint one or more proxies to attend and vote in his place. The proxy must be a member of the Company.

2. To be valid, the proxy must be appointed in writing and any authority under which it is exercised or a copy of such authority granted separately must be deposited at the registered office of the Company not less than 48 hours before the time for the meeting or any adjournment thereof. Forms of proxy are enclosed with this Notice. Completion of a form of proxy will not preclude a member from attending and voting in person.

The company hereby gives notice of its intention to exercise its power to sell all remaining issued shares to Arco Leisure PLC at a price of £14.50 per share as soon as practicable after 20th November 1998 if the resolutions at the EGM are passed.

THE VAST majority of homeowners believe the Government should crack down immediately on cowboy builders - a problem which prompts almost 100,000 complaints to trading standards officers every year.

A survey published yesterday found that 94 per cent of the public believe builders and other tradesmen should be legally required to supply a written guarantee of workmanship.

The survey of 1,000 people, carried out by Skillbase, the home-repair company, and Commercial Union, the insurer, found that one in two people were concerned that they may

be overcharged by unscrupulous contractors. A similar proportion (52 per cent) thought the builder may bodge the repair or home improvement.

The Government is considering 10 proposals to combat the problem, including a Government-run database of approved contractors, and a construction industry tribunal to denote builders who work to an agreed set of standards.

A spokesman for the Association of British Insurers said: "Most companies have helpline services which enable policyholders to be put in contact with a reputable company."

JOHN SUTHERLAND

'More reading is happening than at any time in history. But who is doing the reading? The over-forties and the over-fifties'

— THE THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 4 →

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Popularity polls show class divide

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

Bill Clinton's approval rating has increased since January despite revelations about sexual behaviour and allegations of perjury, a *New York Times/CBS News* opinion poll showed yesterday. But the American population has become yet further polarised over President.

One of the curious elements of the crisis has been that at cocktail parties, dinners and gatherings of the smart in Washington and across America, it is rare to hear a good word spoken about President Clinton; the country divides on class terms, and it is precisely the chattering classes who

have the most negative view. Mr Clinton could say, mixing the table and F Scott Fitzgerald, that the poor are always with him, but the rich are different. Those most likely to disapprove of the President are wealthy people in their fifties, and they have sharply revised their opinion downwards.

Those most likely to approve of him are poor and the young middle-aged, who think better of the President. That coincides roughly with the pattern of the economy this year, as wages have risen steadily if unexcitingly, and the poorest have slightly narrowed the gap with the wealthy.

The poll shows the President's approval rating at 62 per cent, up from 56 per cent in January, though the proportion of those who say he shares their moral values has plummeted from 41 per cent to 29 per cent.

The poll, broken down by various categories, shows some sharp differences. Eighty-six per cent of blacks approve of Mr Clinton, up from 81 per cent, whereas the figure for whites is 58 per cent, from 52 per cent.

People with incomes under \$15,000 have an overwhelmingly positive view of the President. His approval rating among them is 73 per cent, up

from 62 per cent in January. Among the rich - those with incomes over \$75,000 - his approval has dipped from 62 per cent to 59 per cent.

Age shows a more complex pattern. Support for the President in January was strongest among those aged 53 to 64. Support in that age group has fallen from 64 per cent to 56 per cent; in all other age groups it has increased.

There is a regional pattern, too. In most of the country, the President's approval rating has gone up by between 7 and 10 points since January. In the West it has fallen however, from 55 per cent to 55 per cent. In the South, where Mr Clinton's ratings were formerly weakest, they have shot up.

Electorally, the figures will not bring much comfort to the President. The poor often do not bother to vote. The rich are the most likely to vote and - crucially, in an election year - they are the people who fund campaigns.



Bill Clinton with President Havel of the Czech Republic, who is visiting the US. Reuters

Clinton's foes aim to expose evasion

REPUBLICANS INVESTIGATING Bill Clinton's alleged crimes have taken aim at what until now has been his strongest suit and could become his greatest liability: his public image. The release of a video of him testifying to the grand jury would add nothing new to allegations against him. But it could, and probably would, make him look even shittier, and even less sympathetic than he does already.

The video would, crucially, show that he was not penitent, as he has been in public in the past few weeks, but evasive. While Mr Clinton in public is warm and clubbable, under questioning by Kenneth Starr's investigators he became testy and irritable. A key weakness in Mr Clinton's case has been the dissonance between his legal claim that he did not commit perjury and the public perception that he did.

His lawyers say that as a matter of law, he did not. He kept to the definition of sex used in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case, which was the only one that he was offered. Monica Lewinsky says he went further; the President denies that. In any case, they say, it is his testimony against hers, and perjury cannot be proved with out one other witness.

This is all very well but the public has reacted with incredulity. That is why the President's enemies and friends alike have pleaded with the White House to change its tune and adopt a more credible stance. The video will show him being evasive and legalistic in the following exchange:

Q: (Was) oral sex performed on you, within that definition as you understood it, the definition in the [Paula] Jones [case]?

A: As I understood it, it was not; no.

Q: The question is, if Monica Lewinsky says that while you

were in the Oval Office area you touched her breasts, would she be lying?

A: That is not my recollection. My recollection is that I did not have sexual relations with Ms Lewinsky and I'm staying to my former statement about that... My, my statement is that I did not have sexual relations, as defined by that.

Q: If she says that you kissed her breasts, would she be lying?

A: I'm going to revert to my former statement.

This exchange reads badly on paper. On video, this portrait of a man under pressure would look much worse. The second way the video may damage Mr Clinton is by shattering his public image. The way a political personality is constructed, presented and assembled is a matter of high art in US politics, and Mr Clinton has presented himself as a folksy "aw-shucks" guy. Behind the scenes that was not always true. And under questioning by Mr Starr's lawyers, for whom he has shown contempt, he was often angry and confrontational. Showing that on prime-time television will do him no good.

There is a third, and perhaps more devastating risk. The presidency is held in awe by Americans even when the office-holder is not. Showing the man with his pants (metaphorically) around his ankles will make him look what he is: a suspect under questioning, not the nation's commander-in-chief.

The presidency is, in some respects similar to the monarchy as described by the British constitutional writer Walter Bagehot. And the President's advisers would second his thoughts on how damaging disclosure can be: "We must not let daylight in on magic," he said.



A court artist's sketch of the President giving evidence to the grand jury via a video link

Ferraro loses Senate race

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

THE FIRST woman to be nominated for vice-president and one of America's most controversial mayors left the United States political scene after elections on Tuesday.

The polls were primary races to decide party tickets, and give little indication about how the scandal around President Bill Clinton has affected the political climate in America.

Geraldine Ferraro, the only woman to be nominated for the office of vice-president, lost the Democratic primary for the New York Senate race to Charles Schumer, who had spent a record \$8m. He will now face Alfonse D'Amato, the Republican considered to be one of the most vulnerable in the Senate. Ms Ferraro was chosen by Walter Mondale in 1984 as running mate, but his campaign against then-President Ronald Reagan collapsed.

Marion Barry, the controversial mayor of Washington, had decided against standing for the post this year. Mr Barry has dominated the city politics of Washington for two decades as mayor, interrupted by a spell in jail for cocaine possession. His fall from grace was followed by a spectacular repentence and recovery.

The primaries offered a grim insight into the political education of voters. Jacqueline Legerwood polled a quarter of the votes in a race to decide who will represent the Democrats in November's Senate race. Mrs Legerwood died months ago, but too late for her name to be taken off voting cards. Some 39,000 people either did not know, or preferred the dead over the living.

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THE INDEPENDENT
Thursday 17 September 1998

FOREIGN NEWS/13

Eastern promise the key for SPD

SMARTING FROM their defeat in Bavaria, Germany's Social Democrats switched their campaign to the impoverished east yesterday as they tried to shore up their narrowing lead.

Gerhard Schröder's party is still ahead of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats. But on the evidence of two sets of polls published since Sunday's right-wing triumph in Bavaria, the left is leading only by a whisker. Gone are the days when Mr Schröder was sitting on a 12-point lead. The gap has been whittled down to three points, and is closing fast. At this rate Mr Kohl will be jogging past Mr Schröder on the home stretch early next week.

To avoid that fate, the Social Democrats took out adverts in all the main newspapers in eastern Germany yesterday, their most promising hunting ground. It was the east that helped to elect Mr Kohl in the past two elections, and it is the easterners who feel most let down by his policies. All that Mr Schröder has to do is tap into this discontent, and he is home and dry.

BY IMRE KARACS
in Bonn

That should not be too difficult in this region, even if the left-wing vote has to be split there with the Party of Democratic Socialism, the successors to the old communist regime.

Bavaria has shown, however,

that too many Social Democrat sympathisers remain just that. They detest Chancellor Kohl, but do not like Mr Schröder enough to vote for him.

At the SPD headquarters in Bonn, the strategists are scratching their heads. Mr Schröder has banished all things remotely controversial from his speeches, so as not to offend the left. At the same time, he showered voters of the so-called "New Centre" with plaudits, and let his aides preach his pro-business gospel to that audience.

The result is confusion. Some traditional Social Democrats have been alienated, while the battle for the "New Centre" has not gone as well as planned. The secret weapon, Jost Stollmann, a millionaire

entrepreneur, who had been picked as shadow economics minister, has turned out to be a dud. Mr Stollmann stammered so painfully and made so many gaffes in front of the cameras that he had to be withdrawn.

So back to the poor, especially those in eastern Germany, where 20 per cent of the

voters live. That is also where Mr Kohl's army is heading, fortified by the triumphant troops of Bavaria.

Edmund Stoiber, the conservative Bavarian Prime Minister responsible for the rout of the Social Democrats, has cancelled all engagements at home in his haste to the east. Now there are signs that the arrest of the former leftist ter-

rorist Hans-Joachim Klein is also to be exploited.

In the last week before the vote, the campaign is bound to turn dirty. The Christian Democrats have already produced posters reminding voters of Mr Schröder's three divorces. Now there are signs that the arrest of the former leftist ter-

Schröder government, there would be at least three people who do not want to be reminded of this part of German history.

One of them is Mr Schröder himself, who as a lawyer defended an urban terrorist. The pro-Kohl media have seized the terrorist issue with relish. Some of the mud is no doubt sticking.

Suharto faces wealth inquiry

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

FOUR MONTHS after being driven from power, Indonesia's former president Suharto is to be questioned about allegations that he corruptly amassed billions of dollars during his three decades in office.

The government of his successor and former protégé, President BJ Habibie, yesterday announced the formation of an investigative team, headed by the attorney general Muhammad Ghalib. "The people want a clarification of this matter and so does Suharto," Mr Ghalib said. "We will meet very soon and will investigate everything in connection with Suharto's assets and bank accounts."

One of Suharto's sons, Bambang Triyatmojo, was banned yesterday from travelling abroad during an investigation of alleged violations of financial laws at a collapsed bank of which he was part owner.

Estimates of the wealth amassed by the Suharto family range as high as \$30bn, much of it through contracts awarded to their construction, energy, car and toll road businesses.

Despite demands for Suharto's trial and imprisonment, President Habibie has proceeded cautiously against his former mentor, and there are suspicions that the latest investigation is merely a public relations exercise. Last week, Mr Ghalib - like many in the cabinet, a senior officer under Suharto - expressed disbelief at the allegations. "Suharto is a former president," he said, "so he would not lie."

It is a measure of how much Indonesia has changed in the past few months that such allegations can even be raised in public. Under Suharto, insulting the president was a crime.

He has appeared on television to deny the charges, on a station part-owned by his daughter. "There is no proof that I have put... money in foreign currencies," he said. "If it is true, you can contact Indonesian ambassadors in any country concerned to help transfer the money back."



The race to win Germany's general election is neck and neck between Gerhard Schröder (left) and Chancellor Helmut Kohl Peter Müller

Eta ready to call ceasefire before Basque elections

BASQUE SEPARATISTS are preparing to declare a conditional truce within the next few days, ahead of next month's regional elections. Spanish newspaper cited Interior Ministry sources as the basis for its report on Eta's move.

The regional government of the Basque country has also issued a plea to the separatists

BY ELIZABETH NASH
in Madrid

to lay down their arms. Mari Carmen Garmendia, spokeswoman for the autonomous government, appealed to Eta to "hear the clamour of the Basque people and decide once and for all to renounce the use of violence because that way they would accept the will

of the majority of Basques".

The plea has prompted speculation that the conservative Basque National Party (PNV), the axis of the regional government, has had indications that a ceasefire may be announced before campaigning opens on 10 October for Basque regional elections on 25 October. Nationalist sources suggest the terms of any possible cease-

fire might be open-ended to put the government on the spot.

Hints from the Interior Ministry in Madrid point to a truce being declared within days. Some sources suggest, however, that it might be designed to be unacceptable to the conservative government, even before Eta agrees to a ceasefire.

The agreement reached in the Basque town of Estella, signed by all nationalist forces

from the PNV to the pro-Eta Herri Batasuna party plus a number of trade unions and social organisations, called for an open dialogue inspired by the Irish example that would include all sections of Basque society.

Only in the second phase of such a dialogue, the agreement said, would there be a prospect of "a permanent ceasefire of all expressions of violence".

Adding force to that formula, the Catholic Church represented by the Archbishop of San Sebastian reiterated his support for talking first and moving towards a ceasefire later.

The Archbishop's support is an important factor in such a devoutly Catholic region.

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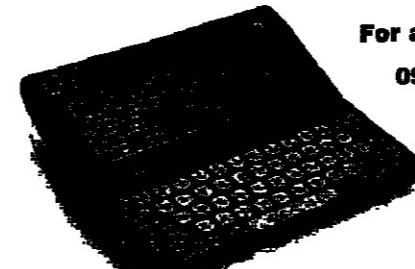
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Russian police pounce on profiteers

DOZENS OF important-looking men in suits and braided uniforms gathered to chat in a grand, high-ceilinged room with Russian landscape paintings on the walls. It looked as though it might be some infernal cocktail party. But this was involved in crisis talk, not small talk.

In the Russian city of Tver, north-west of Moscow, officials and police chiefs are discussing with the provincial deputy governor how to cope with the upheaval that has turned Russia upside down in recent weeks.

The deputy governor of Tver province, Yuri Krasnov, insisted that "the situation is under control". But this crisis meeting in Tver, which will be repeated every few days until further notice, made clear that fears run deep.

To prevent things from getting out of hand, the city authorities have resorted to command economy methods to keep prices down. There is a phone line for citizens to report unreasonable price rises. The tax police are then dispatched "to put the frighteners" on-of-

BY STEVE CRAWSHAW
in Tver

fenders, in the words of one official. Retailers can be prosecuted for unreported profits.

Russia's departing Prime Minister, Victor Chernomyrdin, warned that impending social unrest meant that blood might flow. So far, the attempts to keep Tver and other cities tranquil have been successful. Tver region sells itself as "the soul of Russia". Certainly, most Russians would agree that their country consists above all of the various provinces. As one resident of Tver put it: "Moscow is in a different country." There is little of Moscow's conspicuous wealth to be seen.

In its very ordinariness, little has changed here in a decade. Nine years ago it was still Kalinin, named after one of Stalin's political leaders. This was at the height of the Gorbachev reform era. But, as one man told me in Kalinin in 1989: "Perestroika hasn't reached us here." There were queues for everything, there was nothing to buy, and the Communists

were unshakably in control. Today, the former rulers are gone, though less demonstratively than in Moscow. The main street of Tver is still Soviet Street, the main square is still Soviet Square. A municipal board of honour, where photographs of dedicated Communist Party members and honoured workers used to hang, stands abandoned, with its letters missing.

Meanwhile, the shops are now full of Russian and imported goods in a way that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. The shopkeepers have begun to despair of keeping pace with currency changes. Instead of constantly changing all the price-tags, shoppers are expected to become walking calculators. The labels in one store simply declare: "Multiply by a factor of 1.6 the prices shown."

The shock of the successive price rises has left people reeling in Tver. Tatjana Kachanova, 33, a shop assistant, said: "Before, you could live on your salary. But now, we just don't know. I'm an optimist.

I think things will revive." In some respects, the mood is less apocalyptic here than it is in the Russian capital, partly due to a greater supply of food.

Vladimir Kirillov, a newspaper editor, said: "People are more patient here. The majority have allotments, or have family in the countryside." As in Moscow, there were huge queues when the crisis was at its height. But the panic lasted only very briefly in Tver, in sharp contrast to Moscow. The price of bread was frozen by decree, and the amount of bread was increased: after one day, when the bakery was virtually stormed, everything returned to a kind of normal. Unlike in Moscow, most goods remained on the shelves.

In Tver, where Russian socialism is developed to a degree, they are faintly contemptuous of the Muscovite tendency to make a drama out of a crisis. If the riches of Moscow are a world away, so too are the politics. What the two cities have in common is uncertainty – and a sense of being buffeted on unpredictable waves.



A boy queuing for food in Moscow, where shortages have been much worse than in the provinces

EPA

FRONTLINE
RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN

The woman fighting crime and prejudice

FROM HER desk, senior house officer Begum Shamshad Ashraf looks out on to a battlefield. Her office itself is the same as a police officer's room anywhere, with its framed photographs, miniature flags and a thick belt curled up on a side table.

The battlefield is not the dusty, dirt yard outside where goats scavenge between the armed sentries, but the maze of narrow, twisting alleys in the bazaars beyond, where her 30-odd female officers fight a daily war against murderers, rapists, drug smugglers and thieves, not to mention the prejudice of her male colleagues.

With her easy smile, lipstick and shining brown eyes Ms Ashraf hardly looks like Pakistan's most senior police woman. But ask her about her job and the steel shows.

"I do not think you understand quite how powerful I am," she said curtly. "I could protect the Prime Minister single-handed. I do not even need this." She slapped her .38 service revolver down on her desk with a heavy thud.

As for the attention of Pakistani males, nothing has yet bothered her in 14 years as an officer. "They know better than to mess with me," she said calmly.

Ms Ashraf, 41, commands a force of 35 officers. They have their own women's police station, built in 1994 and opened by the then prime minister, Benazir Bhutto. Ms Bhutto and Begum Ashraf should have much in common. Both have made it to the top in a harsh, male-dominated world and both, if the government's allegations are to be believed, have considerable experience of criminal activity.

The station, in the relatively quiet "civil lines" area of Rawalpindi – a huge metropolis on the northern plains – was less than busy yesterday afternoon. Eight constables were on crowd control at the High Court, eight more were helping hundreds of male colleagues maintain order at a funeral for a religious leader shot dead by a rival sect.

Despite the rigours of her job, Ms Ashraf has a softer side. She has two children, has two university degrees, a certificate in criminology from the University of Australia and writes poetry.

She has published a biography of Pakistan's most famous poet and is a published poet. The subject of her verses? The plight of women in Pakistan.

JASON BURKE



Ashraf: "They know better than to mess with me"

overnight anywhere but in a women's jail. By the small hours the little cell is packed with women picked up off the streets simply because they were out without their husband or a male relative.

Ms Ashraf says the job is hard. "No one wants to be arrested. We are always fighting and being beaten."

The police are not the only ones being beaten. Physical abuse of suspects, bordering on torture, is rife in Pakistani police stations. The seven women's police stations are no exception. Nor is bribing the police to drop charges restricted to male officers.

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She has published a biography of Pakistan's most famous poet and is a published poet. The subject of her verses? The plight of women in Pakistan.

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IN BRIEF

Police hunt Bangladeshi feminist

BANGLADESHI POLICE and media are searching for Taslima Nasreen, a feminist writer who reportedly returned to Dhaka two days ago after four years of self-exile in Sweden. Nasreen angered devout Muslims by making remarks critical of Islamic laws governing women.

Anti-government rally in Albania

ALBANIA'S FORMER President, Sali Berisha, has vowed to continue his campaign to oust the government. Chanting "Death to [prime minister] Fatos Nano!" Mr Berisha's supporters rallied in Tirana's Skanderbeg Square.

Vatican to investigate cardinal

THE VATICAN plans a joint commission with Italy to examine the case of Cardinal Michele Giordano, archbishop of Naples, who is suspected of complicity in loansharking, extortion and criminal association.

Afghanistan crisis: Islamic militia threatens air strikes on cities as Tehran orders thousands of troops to the border

Taliban warn of instant retaliation

THE TALIBAN regime of Afghanistan said it would launch missile or air strikes against Iranian cities if they were attacked. The threats came yesterday as Iran said nine more divisions were heading for the Afghan border for military exercises expected to begin at the weekend.

At the same time, Iranian naval forces were added to the manoeuvres and a commander spoke of being pushed towards war. Seventy thousand Revolutionary Guards, including paratroopers and commandos, have been in the border region since last week. Within days there will be 200,000 Iranian troops and 25,000 Taliban fighters facing each other across the border. Both sides have deployed tanks, artillery and rocket launchers.

The manoeuvres contrasted with a burst of pacific rhetoric from Tehran, where the Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrati, said diplomatic approaches should be given a last chance before taking military action. He said:

BY BORZU ARANI
in Tehran
AND JASON BURKE
in Peshawar

Iran had mobilised "all its efforts" at regional and international levels to "ensure our interests" and had had some results. Shia Muslim Iran has shunned the extremist Sunni Taliban since it emerged four years ago. Tehran accuses it of being a puppet of Pakistan and the US, saying they want to use the Taliban to curtail Iran's influence.

Tehran also fears the Taliban is waging a campaign to wipe out the Shia minority in Afghanistan. After the militia captured the province of Bamyan, in central Afghanistan, on Sunday, Iran's leaders urged Shias there to "rely on God and resist the beasts".

However, moderates close to President Mohammad Khatami are less enthusiastic about a conflict. They have warned against getting involved in "quagmire" in Afghanistan similar to the one the former Soviet Union found itself in when it imposed a pro-Soviet regime on the mountainous country in the 1970s.

"A direct clash is not in our interest," said the Quds newspaper, in Khorasan province, bordering Afghanistan.

"Though we can send a squadron of jets to blast Mullah Omar [the Taliban leader] in his stronghold in Kandahar," it added.

Others have suggested Iran should set up a militia of Afghan refugees, whose number is estimated at several million.

The public mood in Iran remains opposed to a war with Afghanistan, as people still have vivid memories of the 1980-1988 war against Iraq, when 300,000 Iranians were killed and 500,000 wounded.

Even so, Iran is most likely

to use some kind of forceful measures to punish the Taliban.

The National Security Council,

the top political and military decision-making body, has been exploring military options against the militia for several days. Iran says it reserves the right under UN charters to forcibly respond to Afghan aggression.

Earlier this week Iran's

supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told his troops to be prepared for "speedy and timely" action. Yesterday senior officers of the Revolutionary Guards, Iran's elite corps, said they were ready to fulfil any order their leaders gave.

The crisis was precipitated by the killing of 10 diplomats and a journalist by the Taliban when they seized the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif last month. Though the Taliban handed over seven bodies on Sunday, neither side has softened its stance. Iran revealed yesterday that two other diplomats thought to have been killed had escaped.

TO THE unpractised eye they are just two sides of the same coin: two radical Islamic nations engaged in an in-house feud. In fact, hostility between Iran and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan runs deep, fuelled by a dangerous cocktail of geopolitical rivalry, religious differences – and, inevitably, oil.

Only in the most immediate sense does the dispute, which has seen Tehran mass 200,000 troops along its eastern border, stem from the murder of nine Iranian diplomats by Taliban militiamen when they captured the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif last month.

The outrage at the killings was understandable enough. But the very presence of the diplomats in a town previously held by Shia rebel factions reflects the religious divide between the Taliban who are Sunni Muslims, and overwhelmingly Shia Iran. Long before the murder of the diplomats, Iran was providing bases for Taliban opponents. Its hostility now will only be fuelled by reports of large-scale massacres of Shias after the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif.

However, nearly all Islamic countries in the region are Sunni and do not share this instinctive enmity. Pakistan has long been a source of support for the Taliban. Less obviously, Saudi Arabia has extended financial and logistic support to the radical movement. Both are Sunni, and both are among the three countries that have officially recognised the Taliban regime. The other is the United Arab Emirates.

The West too, seems to have quietly decided that the Taliban, however unpalatable some of its methods, is the horse to back. That might not seem so after America's 20 August attack on the Afghan base of the alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden. But the US has been careful to distinguish between the Taliban and Bin Laden.

After two decades of war and civil war since the Soviet invasion of 1979, the fundamental-

ist militia seems to offer the best chance of pacifying and stabilising a shattered country.

And a more stable country is a more suitable place to build a pipeline. So, finally, to oil, or, more exactly, the colossal energy riches of former Soviet central Asia to the north. The prize for which the two regimes are vying is not only regional leadership. It is also the path to be followed by any pipeline carrying oil and gas from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to the deep-water ports in the south.

For the international oil industry the simplest route would be via Iran, crossing just one border on its way to Bandar Abbas on the Straits of Hormuz. Unfortunately, Iran is still subject to US sanctions.

Hence the Afghan alternative. The Houston-based Occidental company and Saudi-owned Delta Oil are ready to go with a 900-mile gas pipeline through Afghanistan to a Pakistani port.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan stand to reap massive economic benefits, which is another reason for their *de facto* alliance. Their gain would be Iran's loss. Hence the suspicion that Tehran is keeping the fighting going to prevent the pipeline.

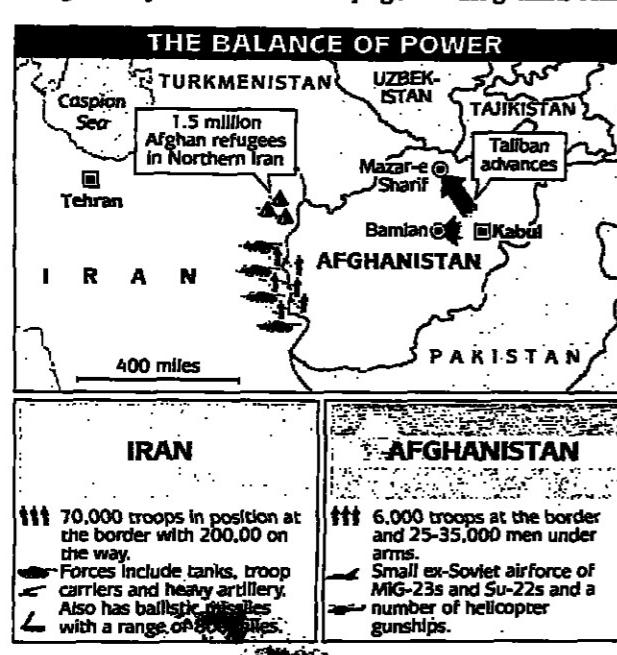
So, in the politics of oil as well, Tehran is also largely isolated from its neighbours, with the partial exception of Russia. Whether Iran likes it or not, the Taliban – which controls over 90 per cent of Afghanistan – will surely soon be recognised by the international community.

For all the belligerent talk from Tehran – and yesterday's closure of the moderate *Tous* newspaper, which had advocated a negotiated solution to the crisis – a full-scale invasion is unlikely. Memories of the carnage of the eight-year war with Iraq are still fresh, as is the failure of the Soviet Union to tame Afghanistan during the same period. If Iran uses force to avenge the diplomats, air strikes will probably be the chosen method.



Politics of oil divides neighbours

BY RUPERT CORNWELL



Iranian women carrying portraits of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, protest during a rally against the Taliban militia in Tehran yesterday. AFP

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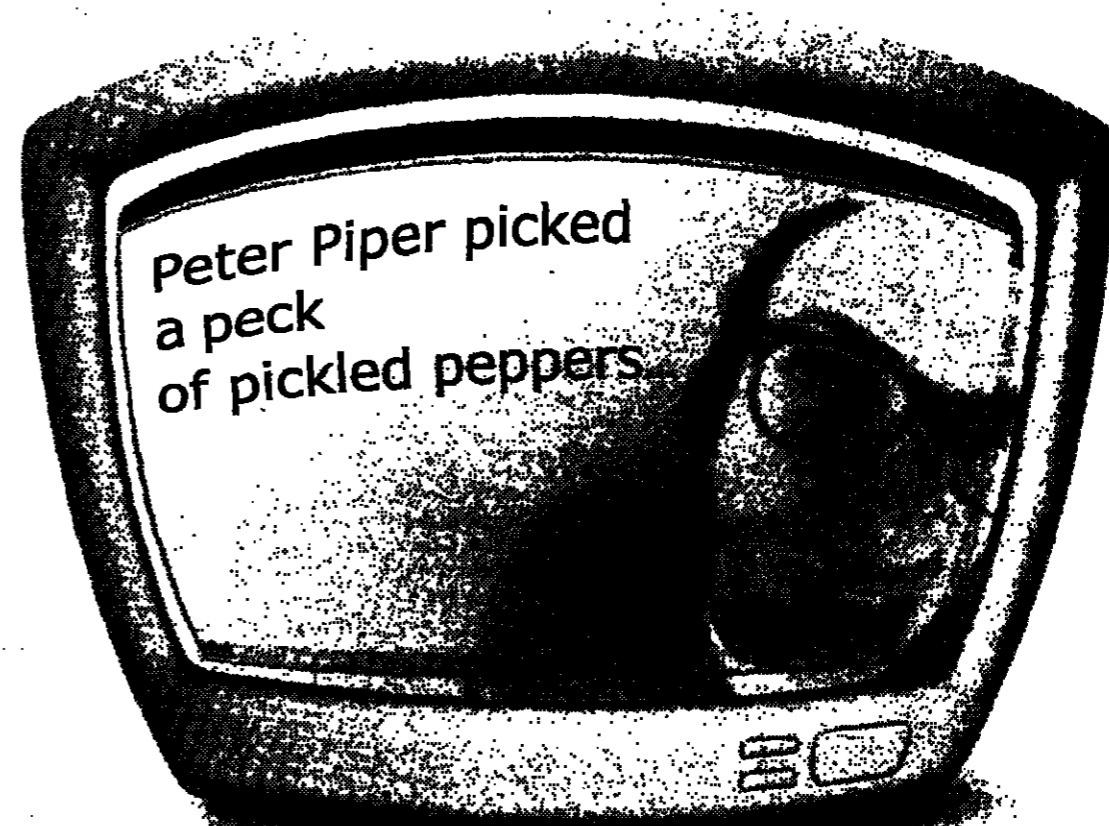
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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Mayflower in Daimler-Benz link

MAYFLOWER YESTERDAY raised the stakes in the bid battle for Dennis by unveiling a strategic alliance with Germany's Daimler-Benz that would include the bus and fire engine manufacturer Mayflower, which is fighting an agreed bid for Dennis from Henlys, said the Daimler-Benz alliance would cover distribution of the Dennis range and help with chassis development and the supply of major components such as drive trains and power units.

Mayflower is offering £255m in cash, compared with a cash and shares offer from Henlys which valued Dennis at £264m at last night's closing price. Henlys, whose offer is being backed by Volvo of Sweden, described the Mayflower announcement as "carefully worded rhetoric" which contained no firm agreement and would be of no benefit to Dennis' shareholders in the short-term.

Business Post warns on profits

BUSINESS POST share price, pence

Source: Datamann

SHARES IN Business Post fell by almost half yesterday after the mail and parcel services group warned that full-year profits would be lower than expected. The shares fell 332.5p to 365p after the company issued a statement saying "earlier sales forecasting assumptions were unrealistic" and pre-tax profits for the year to 31 March 1999 "may now only show modest growth over last year's figure".

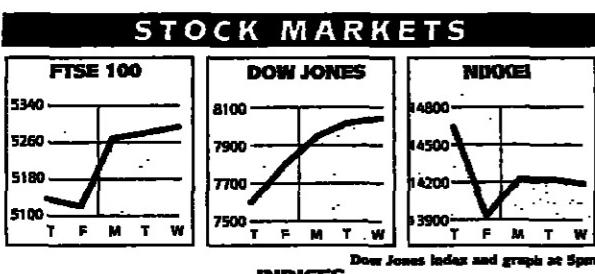
The news followed a review of the group's trading and forecasts instigated after the company's founders, Michael and Peter Kane, returned as directors, with Peter Kane as chief executive. In June, the group reported full-year pre-tax profits of £19.1m, up from £16.1m the year before. Michael Kane, chief executive between 1995 and 1997, has now been appointed managing director.

Britannic to take on 400 staff

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE, the life insurer, saw its shares jump yesterday as it unveiled a £70m plan to recruit 400 more staff and transform its door-to-door sales operation into computer-literate financial advisers.

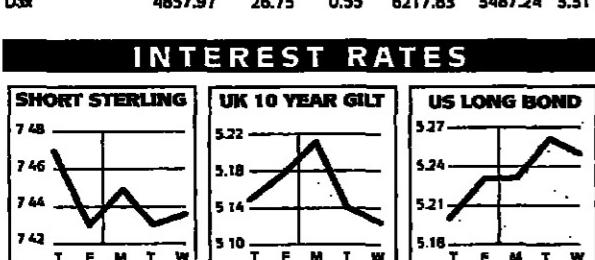
The Midlands-based company is boosting its national sales force to more than 2,280 as part of a programme to bring door-to-door life insurance into the modern age. Staff calling to collect monthly premiums will carry laptops

Investment, page 21



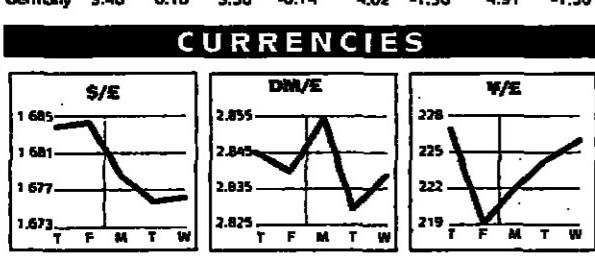
INDICES

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5281.70	10.00	0.19	6183.70	4882.80	3.68
FTSE 250	4758.60	35.30	0.75	5970.90	4426.30	4.33
FTSE 350	2529.20	7.20	0.29	2969.10	2141.80	3.80
FTSE All Share	2451.66	6.77	0.28	2886.52	2106.50	3.81
FTSE SmallCap	2091.80	1.90	0.09	2793.80	2044.80	3.97
FTSE AIM	1170.30	0.40	0.03	1517.10	1140.20	4.40
FTSE AIM	886.10	-1.00	-0.11	1146.90	862.80	1.44
FTSE EBLOC 100	898.50	10.56	1.19
Dow Jones	8059.66	29.09	0.36	9367.84	6971.32	1.85
Nikkei	14197.70	-29.67	-0.21	18439.76	13664.74	1.07
Hang Seng	7860.68	127.21	1.65	15242.65	6544.79	5.20
Dax	4857.97	26.75	0.55	6217.83	3487.24	3.31



MONEY MARKET RATES

Index	3 months	Yr. deg.	1 Year	Yr. deg.	10 year	Yr. deg.	Long bond	Yr. deg.
UK	7.44	0.18	7.08	-0.40	5.13	-1.57	4.83	-1.80
US	5.50	-0.22	5.26	-0.78	4.90	...	5.25	-1.16
Japan	0.43	-0.16	0.47	-0.17	0.98	-1.20	1.48	-1.36
Germany	3.48	0.18	3.56	-0.14	4.02	-1.56	4.91	-1.30



OTHER INDICATORS

Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	12.87	0.37	18.21	GDP	115.40	2.60	112.48	Sept
Gold (\$)	288.95	+1.10	320.75	RPI	163.70	3.30	158.47	Sept
Silver (\$)	4.95	0.02	4.71	Base Rates	7.50	7.00	7.50	Sept

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SOURCE: BLOOMBERG

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.7041	Median (nuevo peso)	15.93
Austria (schillings)	19.27	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0913
Belgium (francs)	56.64	New Zealand (\$)	3.1355
Canada (\$)	2.4490	Norway (krone)	12.21
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8095	Portugal (escudos)	279.02
Denmark (krone)	10.50	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.0810
Finland (markka)	8.3987	Singapore (\$)	2.7390
France (francs)	9.1967	Spain (pesetas)	232.48
Germany (marks)	2.7540	South Africa (rand)	9.6786
Greece (drachma)	469.32	Sweden (korone)	12.69
Hong Kong (\$)	12.53	Switzerland (francs)	2.2757
Ireland (pounds)	1.0942	Taiwan (bahts)	61.58
India (rupees)	65.16	Turkey (liras)	442982
Israel (shekels)	5.8972	USA (\$)	1.6302
Italy (lira)	2717		
Japan (yen)	219.60		
Malaysia (ringgit)	6.0372		
Malta (lira)	0.6123		

Rates for indication purposes only

Bass shares slump on profit warning

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

SHARES IN Bass, the drinks and hotel giant, slumped more than 11 per cent to a two-year low yesterday, wiping almost £200m from the company's market value after it stunned the market with a profit warning.

In a trading statement on the first 48 weeks of the year, the maker of Carling and Grolsch lager said that its pub and drinks businesses had been hit by wet weather; the UK economic slow-

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

down and two product recalls. Sir Ian Prosser, chairman, said: "We have experienced difficult trading conditions over the summer due to the poor weather, a general softening in consumer demand and other external economic and social factors."

The announcement prompted City analysts to slash their forecasts for 1998 profits by nearly

£50m to around £650m, compared with £747m last year. The downgrades triggered a wave of selling, which left Bass shares 97p or 11.8 per cent lower, at 25p.

Bass said its 2,600-strong pubs businesses had suffered from a slowdown in demand. Worst hit were houses in the Midlands and the North, where the combined effect of the manufacturing recession and bad weather caused a loss of sales

and a fall in margins. The slump in the North offset a good performance by the upmarket restaurants and showed down profits growth to 4 per cent from 13.6 per cent in the first half.

Profits in the brewing division were dealt a £12m blow by the recall of millions of cans of lager and bitter in the middle of the World Cup after a contamination scare at one of its plants.

On the export front, the strength of sterling and lower sales of the Hooch alcopop wiped £11m from the profits of the international division. In soft drinks, unit sales of Britvic juice were hit by the wet summer weather and by a product recall which cost £3m.

One City analyst said the warning contained "three surprises": the problems with the pub business, the extent of the

impact of the product recall and the problems with Britvic Pubs were the biggest surprise, especially when you consider all the capital Bass has spent on the division."

Richard North, Bass finance director, said most of the negative items were one-off and added that the problems with the pub business vindicated the company's decision to sell 1,750 houses earlier this year.

BG hits target to make £1.5bn payout

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

BG, THE gas transportation and exploration group, yesterday held out the prospect of a £1.5bn payout to its 1.2 million shareholders after disclosing that it is beating the financial targets set down by the industry regulator, Ofgas.

The group, which emerged from Centrica, the trading arm of British Gas, in February last year, also said it expected to raise a further £450m from asset disposals this year, bringing the total to £1.65bn.

The payout would follow a 1.2bn distribution to shareholders last year through a special issue of 'B' shares. David Varney, BG's chief executive, said the company was now exploring the best route for returning capital to shareholders and said it would be comfortable with a payout of between £1bn and £1.5bn.

This would give it a debt-to-equity ratio of about 50 per cent in its regulated business Transco, which runs the country's gas pipeline and storage network. Mr Varney also disclosed that BG was beating the rate of return set down in its latest price control formula by between £80m and £100m a year.

When the gas regulator, Clare Spottiswoode, announced the new price controls, British Gas described them as the "biggest smash-and-grab raid ever" and warned they could mean 10,000 job losses and undermine the safety of the gas distribution system.

However, Mr Varney said the company was achieving a rate of return of 8 per cent against the 7 per cent implied in the regulator's formula, with a reduction in the headcount of 2,500.

He was speaking as BG reported second-quarter earnings at the bottom end of analysts' forecasts and lifted the interim dividend by 7.5 per cent to 4.3p. Pre-tax profits fell 24 per cent to £187m due to lower transportation charges, higher interest payments and increased severance costs.

Outlook, page p17

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, meeting Japan's Finance Minister, Kiichi Miyazawa, in Tokyo yesterday

Eriko Sugata/Reuters

Greenspan rules out co-ordinated rate cut

BY LEA PATERSON

days following a variety of statements from leading central bankers and finance ministers.

The Dow Jones index fell by 16.74 points to 8007.65 in early afternoon trading, retreating from an earlier 57 point gain. In London the FTSE 100 finished the day up at 5,291.7. Investors were nervous ahead of Mr Greenspan's testimony, which was released after the London markets closed.

Sterling closed at 12M2.835, over a penny up on the day.

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G7's band aid solution won't work

WHAT DO world leaders mean when they talk about "co-ordinated action" to deal with the crisis in the international economy? Financial markets would like to think it means a synchronised cut in interest rates across the G7 countries; certainly that is what is required to have a convincing floor under Western equities right now.

Unfortunately, it is already plain as a pikestaff that this is not going to happen, not in the immediate future at least. Politicians can presumably still hope to influence the level of interest rates, but they no longer determine them. And the central bankers who do are sticking religiously to their brief, which in most cases is to keep the lid on domestic inflation.

Thus Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, was unable to hold out any more than the hope that interest rates have peaked at this week's TUC conference. Hans Tietmeyer, his German counterpart, was more intransigent still. Monetary policy in euroland was just fine, he said, and there would be no cuts. So that appears to be that, for four of the G7 at least.

As for the remaining three, there's no chance of a cut in Canada,



OUTLOOK

da while the currency remains so weak. And in Japan, rates are already as low as can be without getting into the cloud-cuckoo-land of having to pay the borrower for the privilege of lending to him.

In the end, of course, the only one that really matters is the US. But even here official thinking on policy has yet to shift significantly away from the old priority of controlling inflation to dealing with the new threat of deflation. If Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, has changed his thinking, he was offering few clues to it in his Congressional testimony last night.

There are, of course, other things world leaders can do to

counter the present threat to the international economy beyond cutting interest rates or introducing capital controls. Gordon Brown, the British Chancellor, has been full of them during his visit to Japan. Mr Greenspan was similarly on message during his testimony last night. They could, for instance, bolster the IMF with fresh funds. If Republican opposition in the US continues to frustrate this process, bilateral loans to crisis-torn regions might be possible. There is already talk of such action in the event of the crisis snowballing in Brazil. There are also alternative ways of adding liquidity to markets.

Regrettably, set against the battement of rate-of-interest policy, none of these solutions offer more than a band-aid approach to the problem. It is the job of central bankers to stand above often-exaggerated predictions of disaster and make a considered judgement on these matters, but over the last month, the odds on the emerging markets contagion spreading to the US economy do seem to have shortened significantly. Given the seriousness of the position, it would be unwise of the Fed to test the

As George Soros, the international speculator, neatly put it in his testimony earlier this week to the US House Committee on Banking and Financial Services: "Financial markets are peculiar in this respect: they resent any kind of government interference, but they hold a belief that if conditions get rough, the authorities will step in." For the time being that presumption is proving a long way from the truth.

Gas regulation

Hindsight is admittedly a wonderful thing. But with every day that passes it becomes more apparent still that BG got off lightly at the hands of the departing gas regulator, Clare Spottiswoode. Remember the fearful wailing and gnashing of teeth that followed her initial proposals for controlling the prices Transco charges for piping gas around the country? The biggest smash-and-grab raid in history, the gasmen - seizure of shareholders' funds on an unprecedented scale. There would be 10,000 job losses and the integrity of the entire gas network would be at risk. That was two years ago. These

days the gasmen don't like to be reminded of their apocalyptic predictions. In fact, it has all turned out rather nicely. Far from being raped and pillaged, BG has found enough slack in its balance sheet to return £1.2bn of capital to shareholders and now it is contemplating the return of a further £1.5bn. What's more, it is beating the rate of return set down by the regulator and endorsed by the Monopolies Commission to the tune of £100m a year. And the job losses? Er, they are actually nearer 2,500 than 10,000.

Perhaps it is just as well that the regulated business is doing better than expected, because the unregulated bits of BG, such as exploration and downstream oil and gas, are looking sickly at \$12 a barrel. Nor does the deepening crisis in emerging markets augur well for BG's international ambitions.

Despite a £90m cut in revenues, rising redundancy charges and further depreciation, BG has managed to limit the fall in operating profits at Transco to a mere £5m. The departing Ms Spottiswoode might argue that this is what emerged market regulation is all about. But it ought to give her successor, Calum McCarthy, some food for

thought when the Government gets around to announcing his appointment as the new Energy Regulator.

Goldman Sachs

CONDITIONS in investment banking could hardly be worse right now, but every cloud, as they say, has a silver lining. For many in the City and on Wall Street it is the evident discomfort of Goldman Sachs over the timing of its stock-market float which, given the crisis in financial markets and the precipitous fall in banking shares, could hardly be more unfortunate. Goldman Sachs makes a king's ransom every week by advising on precisely this sort of thing: that it should slip up so badly on the timing of its own float is an eventually faced with comic irony.

In theory, the present bear market shouldn't matter too much as only 10 per cent of Goldman Sachs is being floated initially, with the rest locked in for up to five years. That might seem bad enough for the vendors - a stake that a couple of months back would have fetched \$60 is now worth just half that - but given that the great bulk of the equity won't be traded and that Jon

Corzine, co-chairman, has said until he's blue in the face that the float isn't about money it ought not to scupper the planned listing altogether.

Unfortunately, market chaos is also undermining the stated purpose of the float, which as you can imagine purports to be a higher one than that of enriching the partners.

One of these purposes is to achieve a more efficient and less costly capital structure. Since the cost of servicing banking equity has doubled since the early summer it is not apparent that this argument still holds true. The other stated purpose was to enable Goldman to use its capital to do deals and take advantage of global consolidation in financial services. Again, turmoil in financial markets is bringing the process of globalisation and consolidation to a grinding halt.

Maybe Goldman's traditional partnership structure is more suited to the lean years ahead than publicly quoted status. Mr Corzine's flotation plans were vociferously opposed by a not insignificant minority of partners. If market conditions continue as they are, their voices will be heard once more, especially if third-quarter performance was as bad as some rivals say.

HOW THE WORLD'S TWO BIGGEST COMPANIES STACK UP

MICROSOFT: WORTH \$261bn*	GENERAL ELECTRIC: WORTH \$257bn*
Chairman & CEO since 1981: Born: 28 October 1955 Dropped out of Harvard University 1975 Founded Microsoft in 1975 Earned \$561,000 in 1996 (including a \$222,000 bonus)	Chairman & CEO since 1981: Born: 19 November 1934 Studied Chemical Engineering at University of Massachusetts; PhD at University of Illinois - 1960 Worked at GE since 1960 Earned \$6,300,000 in 1996 (including a \$4,000,000 bonus)
• World's biggest maker of personal computer software - Microsoft competes in more markets than there are digits in the net worth of Bill Gates, who is the richer man on the planet	• Diversified manufacturer, technology and services company, making almost everything from jet engines to light bulbs and locomotives
• Behind MS-DOS and Windows operating systems, used on the majority of personal computers around the globe. Microsoft Office provides spreadsheets and word processors and other tools for the corporate and home computer users, as well as the Internet browser Internet Explorer	• GE Capital accounts for nearly 40 per cent of total earnings, making GE the world's largest non-bank finance company
• Profit more than half GE on 1/6th of revenue	• GE also owns NBC, the number one American television network
• Founded by Bill Gates with high school friend Paul Allen in an Albuquerque hotel room in 1975. Traded in March 1986 at \$21 a share	• 106 years old; founded 1892 in New York when Thomson-Houston merged with Edison General Electric Co
• Based Seattle, Washington	• Based in Fairfield, Connecticut
• 22,323 employees	• 276,000 employees
• Listed on Nasdaq	• Only company to have been in Dow Jones Industrial Average since Dow started
• 17.79 record high share price of \$119 %	• 30.11.94 overtook AT&T to become biggest company on Wall St
• 17.79 record high share price of \$119 %	• 1.7.98 first company to reach \$300bn market cap
• Value at Monday's market close	• 17.7.98 record high share price of \$119 %

*Value at Monday's market close

Microsoft topples GE as king of the market

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

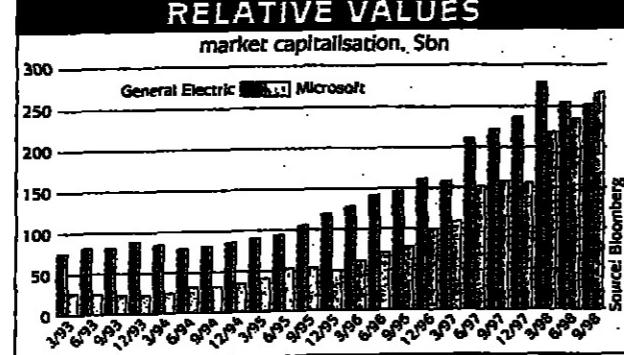
AT EXACTLY what hour during Monday's market trading Microsoft overtook General Electric as the most valuable company in the United States nobody quite knows, but the election has attracted wide attention. The lion of the old economy has been toppled, goes the myth - the 21st century is here.

As a symbol of the new primacy of the technology sector is the engine of US prosperity, the vaulting of Microsoft to the number one spot, at least in valuation terms, is indeed powerful. Let us forget, for a second, that by every other measure GE remains vastly bigger than the house Bill Gates built.

It was only in July that GE, led since 1981 by Jack Welch, was basking in the glory reflected from the performance of its stocks. Then it became the first corporation in US history to achieve a valuation above \$300bn (£190bn). But that was when the Wall Street bull ramped. Everyone has felt the strain of the market turmoil of recent weeks; as it happens, though, GE has suffered more than Microsoft.

A race is on almost as compelling for American spectators as the race on the baseball field for the all-time record home runs struck in a single season between Mark McGwire of the St Louis Cardinals and Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs. At Monday's close, Microsoft was valued at \$261.2bn compared with \$257.1bn for Connecticut-based GE. Nobody else is even close, but miles behind, is another Leviathan of American industry, Exxon Corp, with a value of \$171.5bn at Monday's close. Next comes beverage giant Coca-Cola with \$16.5bn.

News Analysis: Bill Gates's all-conquering software giant now has the highest valuation on the Dow



Microsoft has long been the standard-bearer of the hi-tech revolution, but GE might be seen to stand for the past, if only by virtue of its age. More than a century old, it was born in 1892 as the combination of Thomas-Houston Co and Edison General Electric. Moreover, it is the only company that has had its shares listed on the Dow Jones Industrial Average since the index's inception.

Its public image, moreover, is still overwhelmingly as an industrial manufacturer. It is known in particular for those big-ticket items that are especially vulnerable to cyclical downturns - large domestic appliances, from clothes washers to cookers, as well as aircraft engines. No less than 40 per cent of its revenue, however, comes these days from GE Capital Corp, its financial services unit.

Notwithstanding the recent toll on its shares, GE is hardly in the doldrums. If the bull returns it could quickly reclaim its \$300bn crown. Confidence in the company derives in part from the extraordinary reputation of Mr Welch. He is expected to stay at least until the end of

2000. Asked recently which chief executive America he most admired, Microsoft's Bill Gates did not hesitate before naming Mr Welch.

GE's NBC television unit, meanwhile, continues to achieve double-digit growth and has reigned among the networks for five years. "GE has many businesses that have value and superior management," said Robert Spremulli, an analyst with Teachers Insurance, which holds 35 million shares in the company. "In the long scheme of time GE, with its makeup, will prevail."

For now, however, the winner's trophy is Microsoft's. That it has overtaken GE in the value stakes is remarkable from many standpoints. For one, it is still small by comparison. In the year ended 30 June, Microsoft had \$14.5bn in revenue and \$4.79bn in earnings. That compares with revenues at GE in 1997 of \$90.8bn and earnings of \$8.2bn.

With that in mind, Microsoft played down the significance of what, after all, was a paper victory. "While growing shareholder value is important,

Microsoft doesn't view market capitalisation as a particularly critical measurement," a spokeswoman said. "Microsoft has been fortunate to be at the forefront of growth in the technology industry but success can be fleeting in an industry so competitive."

If GE spells the industrial age, Microsoft has long been the icon of the information era. Its success in multiplying share value is the stuff of legend. With its dominating presence in providing software systems to personal computers and its success in exploiting the explosion of the Internet, it has seen its stock value multiply almost 5,000 per cent in 10 years.

The generosity of the company in distributing shares to its employees has delivered no fewer than 4,000 millionaires around its Redmond, Washington, base. These are the so-called Microsoft Millionaires.

And, in spite of well-publicised legal difficulties, Microsoft remains well positioned to sustain its growth. In a recent report, the US Commerce Department noted that the IT industry now accounts for nearly 8 per cent of the US economy. More strikingly, the sector can be credited for nearly a quarter of economic growth in the country.

Equally telling is the continuing willingness of investors to put their faith in Microsoft in spite of those legal storms clouds. This week, a judge in Washington DC rejected a Microsoft bid to have a potentially grave government anti-trust lawsuit against it thrown out. The first evidence in the government's case that the company indulged in illegal market practices to protect the dominance of its Windows platform, combined with new Web browser technology, will be heard on 15 October.

Collapse of buying group adds to pressure for Co-op merger

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City editor

with the larger Co-operative Wholesale Society.

The failure of the Consortium of Independent Co-operatives, led by the Co-operative Retail Society, will leave the individual members to organise their own deals with food suppliers.

This will lead to a dramatic rise in their supermarket costs, at a time when the members are already struggling to cope with high debts and mounting losses.

The collapse of the buying consortium coincides with the retirement of Harry Moore, the CRS chief executive, who has been opposed to a merger

movement. Perhaps the collapse of this consortium will push them closer together?

The CIS's members include

the CRS - which has now been renamed Co-operative - as well as the United, Yorkshire, Scot-Mid and Portsea co-ops. The consortium benefited from buying power of more than £1bn, but it was poorly organised. It was also dwarfed by the rival buying group led by the CWS, which had buying power of £2.5bn.

Analysts say that if the Co-op movement cannot agree to a full merger it will have to form a single buying entity if its supermarkets are to have any chance of competing effectively against the major grocers such as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda.

Figures released by the CRS in May showed that its losses nearly doubled to £25.6m, while bank borrowings stood at £155m.

The CRS has been further damaged by the sudden departure of David Robey, its head of food retailing. He is leaving to join Shell where he will run the Select convenience stores at Shell's petrol stations.

Yesterday the CWS reported a slight increase in operating profits from £253m to £266m, helped by a record performance from the Co-operative Bank.

Like-for-like sales in food retailing were higher by 5 per cent, although costs were also higher due to increased investment.

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Dr. M. S. S.

British firms go unpaid in Russia chaos

IT LOOKS as inevitable as the onset of Russia's freezing winter. Soviet-era economic remedies are back in fashion in Moscow. And British companies, once heroic pioneers on the rough soil of its opening markets, are looking on in mute horror.

The new Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov has yet to complete assembling his team, but the presence of two veterans - the Soviet-era central banker Viktor Gerashchenko and Yuri Maslyukov, once head of Gosplan - has been enough to instil international gloom. Talk abounds of protectionism and Soviet-style hard currency controls.

Even the latest top government appointment, a pro-marketeer called Alexander Shoktin, admitted yesterday that, without western aid, the money-printing presses will roll; it would now be a miracle if they didn't.

None of the thousands of foreign companies working in Russia - including about 300 from Britain - is insulated from the fall-out of Russia's deepening economic crisis, which saw the rouble fall again yesterday. Scores of locally hired staff have been laid off. Others have gone unpaid for weeks, because of the paralysis which has seized the Russian banking system.



Gerashchenko: Soviet-era central banker is back

A few have flown home, notably the international bankers, badly scalded by Russia's default of \$40bn of rouble-denominated short-term debt. Expansion plans have been torn up, and advertising budgets cancelled. Attention has switched to the question of whether it is worth soldiering on what was always an unpredictable emerging market, complicated by corruption and bureaucracy, but which is now in utter chaos.

Leading the victims - apart from bankers - are the foreign companies which import goods into Russia, the confectionery, clothing, medicines, foodstuffs and other consumer products which were hard to find under the Soviet Union, but have now become part of Russian life. Together, these firms are owed many hundreds of millions of dollars (or the rouble equivalent) by Russian distributors who cannot pay their bills because their own money is in failing Russian bank accounts.

BY PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

One survey of 50 foreign companies is said to have found that, together, they are owed \$450m, trapped by the banking freeze. The effect is to bring business to a halt.

"We've stopped importing stock," said Paul Carter, of SmithKline Beecham, which imports cosmetic and pharmaceutical products such as Aquafresh toothpaste, and is currently owed \$20m by its Russian clientele. "At the moment there is a vacuum in the market, in which we have the consumer demand but no product. It's incredibly frustrating."

Like many, Mr Carter is trying to recover his company's money while also watching for clues to the new Russian government's economic policy. "The big fear of the multinational importers is that the trouble will be truly convertible, as we have to pay for our products in hard currency."

Inevitably, the crisis has also spawned its own class of grifters, who are not affected by it directly, but claim to be. Suspicions abound that some Russian distributors, now not paying for their products, have bulging US dollar accounts offshore - "escape money" against the day that the government finally implodes and retributions begin or, for that matter, the taxman's knock on the door.

Ultimately, there is little that foreign creditors can do to recover their money, beyond refusing to supply more stock or offering generous rescheduling deals. The legal system is still strewn with loopholes, and the courts are overburdened. Personal relationships, forged over the vodka bottle, now count as never before. But many millions will be written off.

All this amounts to a reversal of fortune in which the foreign importers helped create the conditions for their current woes. Hungry to penetrate vast, untouched markets, they were willing to expand aggressively despite the lack of credit sources (banks were far more interested in pocketing the profits of high-interest short-term government paper than lending to Russian entrepreneurs).

They found themselves extending ever-larger credits to their distributors, most of which were, in effect, unsecured because of the byzantine nature of the legal system. Worse, some foreign companies were lured into a complex web, from which it is now impossible to squeeze funds because they do not know with whom they are dealing.

For instance, they signed distribution deals with shell offshore companies, only to have the goods received by one subsidiary, while a second would undertake to make payments. The result, according to experts at Andersen Legal (an affiliate of

Arthur Andersen), is that their debtors are judgment-proof.

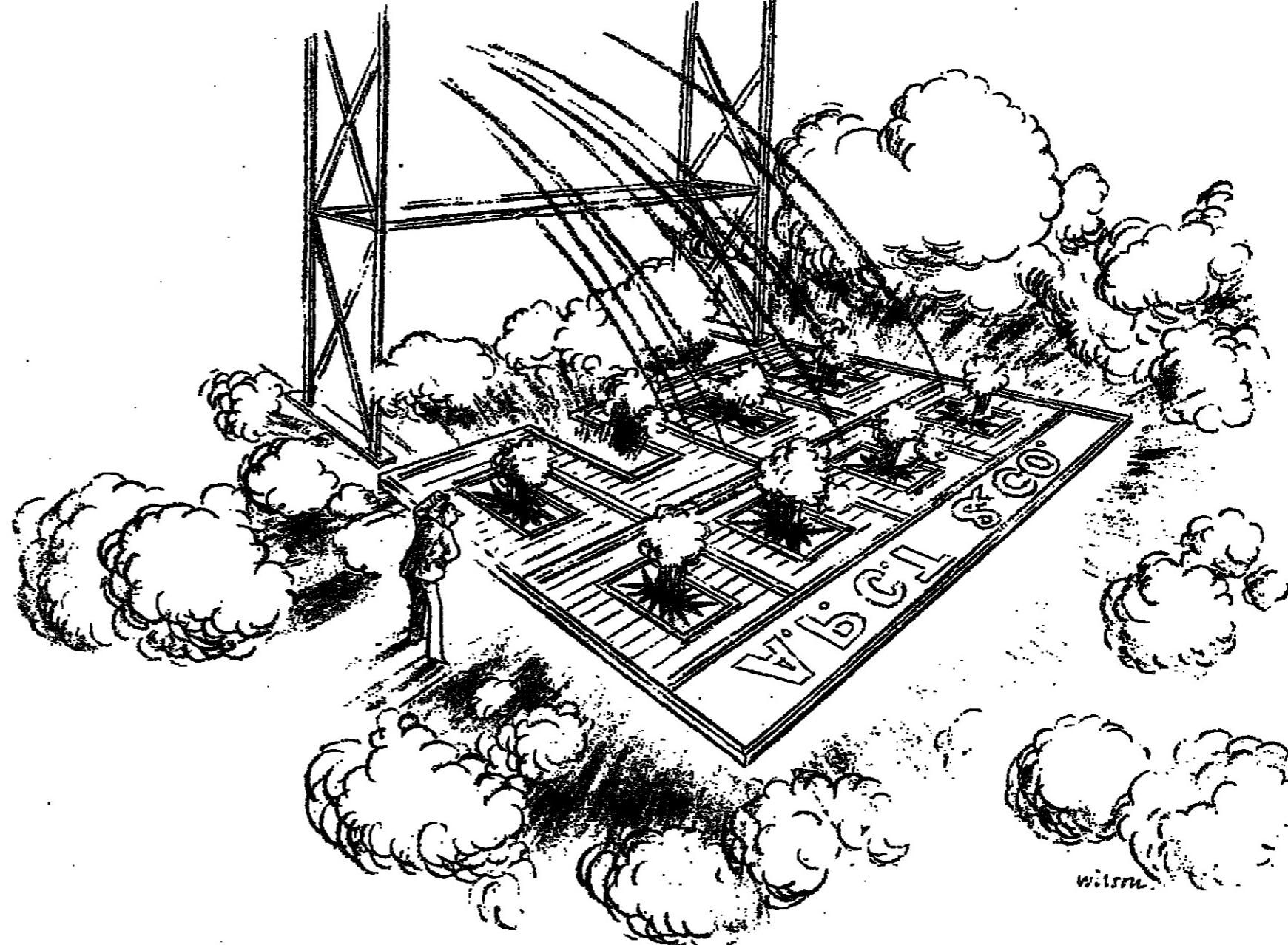
Even if the system extracts itself from its current gridlock, the effects will be felt for a long time. Trust - between foreign importer and local distributor, banker and client - has been dealt a bruising blow.

A year ago, there was euphoria among Moscow's foreign companies, who were rubbing their hands gleefully at the prospect of a growing economy in a country of 147 million, replete with vast potential markets. All that has changed. Unless Mr Primakov and his friends overhaul the Russian banking and legal system, confidence is unlikely to recover fast.



A demonstrator carrying a portrait of Lenin shouts anti-Yeltsin slogans at a demonstration in Moscow. Soviet-era economic remedies are coming back into fashion and foreign companies working in Russia have to decide whether to soldier on amid corruption and chaos

Our competitors promise to save money on BT's business calls. Frankly, there isn't much behind them.



IN BRIEF

New measure from accounting watchdog completes crackdown

THE Accounting Standards Board has completed its crackdown on financial engineering excesses with today's publication of a standard outlawing companies from including provisions in their accounts unless they have an obligation to meet such liabilities as pollution or restructuring costs.

Financial Reporting Standard 12 is designed to spell the end of "big bath" accounting where organisations made huge provisions for future reorganisations and then fed them back into income over several years with the aim of smoothing accounts.

Wassall looks for £1bn buys

WASSALL, the mini-conglomerate changing into an investment trust, said it could spend up to £1bn on acquisitions. The company, which is fighting a takeover battle for lighting group TLG, said it was looking at "low-tech" businesses, such as engineers, in Europe and Asia. Interim operating profits rose 10 per cent to £14m.

Parc scraps £40m flotation

PARC, a specialist recruitment company, yesterday scrapped its £40m flotation because of difficult market conditions. The company, a management buyout from the Irish airline Aer Lingus, said it pulled the float because "the value achievable in the current market conditions would not reflect the true quality of the business".

Better cost savings at Somerfield

SHARES IN Somerfield, the supermarket group, received a boost yesterday when the company said cost savings from its merger with Kwik Save will be £20m higher than thought. Somerfield told shareholders at its annual meeting yesterday that it anticipated savings of more than £70m. The company said like-for-like sales in the first 6 weeks at its main Somerfield stores were "stable" at minus 2.1 per cent. The shares rose 22p to 467.5p.

It seems every new telecoms company that opens its doors claims it can save your business more money than BT.

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Certainly, our competitors don't take into account the £8 million a day we've spent over the last 13 years ensuring

the quality of our service; the 53,000 people working on our network; or that we monitor the reliability of our network 24 hours a day.

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Call **Freephone 0800 800 800** or visit our website on www.bt.com/business and find out how much you can save, and still have the promise of BT behind you.



Bass takes the shine off the market

IS ANOTHER oil deal looming following the £910m merger between British Borneo and Hardy Oil & Gas? With the crude price in the doldrums oil companies are, on past valuations, looking increasingly cheap. Any group with predatory instincts must feel the time is ripe to strike.

Step forward Eni Nazionale Idrocarburi, the state-owned Italian group. Reports from Milan say it has "talked for ages" about making a takeover bid for Enterprise Oil, up 24.5p at 390p (after 405p).

Like the rest of the industry Enterprise, which has significant Italian interests, has fallen sharply from its rarefied peak. At one time the shares were riding near 730p as its wide spread of interests made it a magnet for any industry follower.

Enterprise and ENI already enjoy a close working relationship and there is little doubt Enterprise, capitalised at approaching £1.9bn, would make an ideal swallow for ENI, which is in the process of being privatised and may feel it needs an impressive deal.

The Italian giant denied earlier this month that it was interested in Enterprise but, intriguingly, added:

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

"Major oil companies are considering ways in which to concentrate their business activities with those of other companies" but it had not identified specific opportunities to this end."

Enterprise shares were encouraged by Lehman Brothers support and indications that its Llano field in Mexico had potential reserves of more than 1bn barrels.

Most other oil shares remained in depression but Lasmo, once an Enterprise target, rose 6p to 177p.

The rest of the market failed to

hold on to early inspiration despite increasingly confident talk that lower interest rates are on the way. Although at one time 78.9 points up, the Footsie looked like ending in negative territory until a late burst produced a 10-point gain to 2,591.7.

Supporting shares were for once more resolute, with the mid cap index up 35.3 to 4,758.6, although the small cap had to be content with a 1.9-point advance to 2,981.8.

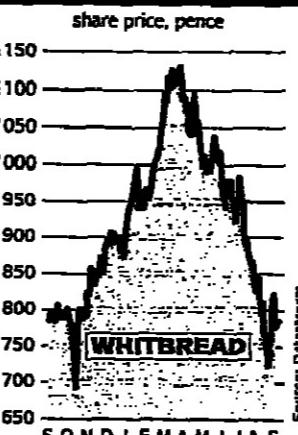
Brewer Bass was the major blue-chip casualty, tumbling 97p to 725p as profit forecasts were slashed following a downbeat trading statement. Scottish & Newcastle fell 49.5p to 725p in sympathy. But Whitbread managed to shrug off the brewer's drop on the back of Credit Lyonnais support. The investment house cut its profit expectations but moved its stance from hold to buy. Analyst Nick Williamson has lowered this year's expectations by 10m to £374m and next by 30m to £340m to £388m.

Tales of another supermarket price war, usually a phoney exercise, ruffled food retailers. J Sainsbury, said to be leading the campaign, fell 4.5p to 562.5p and

Tesco lost 2p to 171p. Asda was hit 4.25p to 180.75p but Somerfield, on the back of an upbeat trading statement, put on 22p to 467.5p.

BTG's progress came to a halt on an uninspiring trading statement.

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Source: Datastream

SOND J FMAMJJAS

cussions with LA and want to put three directors on the board.

Lorrio, the other half of the split conglomerate, rose 12p to 275p, in part reflecting the recent improvement in the gold price. Clare-

Wetherspoon's neutral comments. Sling & Lettice fell 15p to 192.5p and newcomer Pubco's bars sp to 50p.

Wetherspoon hardened 1.5p to 169p.

Imperial Chemical Industries, following the Merrill Lynch downgrading, managed to steady up 3p to 523p. But British Steel slipped 2p to 100.6p after SG Securities slashed profit forecasts from £240m to £95m and from £690m to £225m.

Avis Europe, the car hire group, reversed 2.5p to 228p with HSBC talking of selling the shares down to 180p. Business Post, with a profits warning, produced the day's biggest fall, of 47 per cent at 36p.

Navan Resources, the Irish explorer, jumped 6p to 40.5p talk of a major overseas group taking a stake. Emerald Energy softened 0.25p to 8.25p after its comments about "live oil shows" in Colombia.

On the insurance pitch St James' Place put on 12.5p to 296p. There is talk that Prudential Corporation may pounce: the Pru firm a few coppers to 82.5p.

SEAG VOLUME: 1,010 million
SEAG TRADES: 63,076
GILTS INDEX: n/a

Kingfisher shows the way for retail sector

INVESTMENT

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

KINGFISHER: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £7.3bn, share price 540p (+20p)

Trading record	96	97	98	97	98
Revenue (£m)	5.3	5.6	6.4	2.9	3.0
Pre-tax profits (£m)	312	389	521	157.9	226.3
Dividends per share (p)	12.7	20.6	28.4	8.5	11.7
Dividends per share (p)	8.1	9.5	11.5	3.25	3.75

Like-for-like sales %	Share price pence
12	600
10	550
8	500
6	450
4	400
2	350
-2	300
0	250
2	200
4	150
6	100
8	50
10	0

Britannic is streets ahead

ON THE face of it, Britannic Assurance is a dull old door-to-door life insurer from the Midlands, serving those people advertisers like to call the C's, D's and Es. Britannic's salespeople still visit their customers to collect cash premiums. It is small-ticket business (perhaps £10 or £20 a month). And the margins are modest. How could this be a tempting investment?

In fact, there are some very good reasons why it is exactly that. First there is the recent takeover of rival London & Manchester by Friends Provident for the very full price of £744m. If other insurers will be納ve to the same logic, Britannic will be snapped up.

True, many rivals are puzzled by the big price paid by Friends – even given the unfortunate fact that it was set

before the equity markets tumbled. But the deal still gave door-to-door insurers an unfamiliar air of desirability.

Britannic's rivals are struggling. Liverpool Victoria has taken three-quarters of its sales force off the road after discovering they were poorly trained; United Assurance is struggling to rebuild its sales after a huge shake-out.

But Britannic is streets ahead. New business was up 15.6 per cent in the year to June. Its staff have increased their productivity: the man from Britannic now comes equipped with a laptop.

With the benefit of a 7.5 per cent return from £1bn of newly acquired orphan assets, shareholders enjoyed earnings per share up 86 per cent to 84.6p.

Operating profit rose 11.2 per cent to £78.2m. Britannic also has the financial strength to weather any more equity market storms.

Britannic shares jumped 45p

to 1,281p yesterday, valuing the company at 1.3 times Merrill Lynch's estimate of its book value. Given that London & Manchester was bought for 1.6 times book that's still cheap. Buy.

AMV eases fears of slump

YOU HAVE to feel for Abbott Mead Vickers. The advertising and marketing group has long avoided rash international ventures in favour of building up its business in the UK. Until a few months ago, this meant it was seen as a safe option in a risky industry. But then investors started worrying about the British economy and AMV shares promptly dropped 40 per cent.

Half year figures, released yesterday, went some way towards easing fears of an imminent slump. Adjusted for the sale of the League Delaney agency, turnover was up 12 per cent, while operating profits jumped 18 per cent. The chairman, Peter Mead, insists there is no sign of slowdown so far.

What's more, AMV believes it is better prepared this time. It argues that in tough economic times companies switch from building their brands to boosting sales with one-off campaigns. As a result, AMV has invested heavily in direct marketing and public relations businesses, which will protect revenues if traditional advertising spending tails off.

Analysts have left full-year profit forecasts unchanged at £19.4m, putting AMV shares – which rose 23.5p to 222.5p yesterday – on a forward multiple of 18. That's a discount to AMV's larger rivals. But until the economic outlook clears the shares are not much of a buy.

The Barclay brothers are also pumping £10m into the op-

The son of Tarzan is also rising

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK



Budding media magnate Rupert Heseltine is helping to launch Haymarket's 'PR Week' in the US UPP

board as a non-ex.

"Data is going up and up and our main thrust is to partner everybody," Lord Young tells me. "People will deal with us because hopefully we're honest."

He has popped up as a non-executive chairman of Inter-Digital Networks (IDN), set up in December to handle high-speed data communications for business customers.

Young Associates, the peer's private investment company, has a controlling stake in IDN. David Dey, the former chief executive of Energen, is also on the horizon of its 40 odd journalists.

The upheaval is due in January, and there is rebellion in the air. Staffed staff were told on Friday afternoon that as the paper's new landlords want to ramp its rent, it's time to move. The Barclay twins are negotiating over two possible sites – Westferry Circus at Canary Wharf, a reporter's notebook thrown from The Independent's own offices, or South Quay, recently rebuilt after the IRA bomb.

This means there is a real possibility that Sunday Business editor Jeff Randall and some other former Daily Telegraph journalists may find themselves back in the old Telegraph building in South Quay they moved to in 1987.

The Barclay brothers are also pumping £10m into the op-

eration by buying The Guardian's printing press at South Quay. The press will print Sunday Business and London editions of The Scotsman.

WATCH OUT BT, Lord Young of Grafton is back. The former cabinet minister and ex-chairman of Cable & Wireless yesterday returned to the telecoms industry after a three year gap. Lord Young, you may recall, was shown the door at C&W after falling out with his chief executive, James Ross.

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The Barclay brothers are also pumping £10m into the op-

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark Spot
UK	1.0000	2.8323	2.8244	0.5964	0.5974	0.5924	0.5274
Australia	2.8323	1.9571	1.9561	1.6871	1.6871	1.6871	1.7018
Austria	1.9571	1.9580	1.9580	1.8501	34.934	34.974	34.754
Belgium	3.5205	2.5168	2.5085	1.5033	1.5033	1.5033	1.5033
Denmark	10.816	10.791	10.787	1.1600	1.1615	1.1615	1.1625
ECH	8.6357	8.6078	8.5540	5.1500	5.1418	5.1256	5.0428
France	9.517	9.4827	9.4748	5.6785	5.6785	5.6785	5.6785
Germany	2.8981	2.8728	2.8611	1.9193	1.9045	1.9045	1.7736
Greece	12.889	13.002	13.054	7.7472	7.7472	7.7422	7.7422
Hong Kong	1.1316	1.1219	1.1200	1.1200	1.1200	1.1200	1.1200
Ireland	1.1328	1.1328	1.1328	1.1328	1.1328	1.1328	1.1328
Italy	2.8015	2.7985	2.7985	1.9503	1.9527	1.9527	1.9527
Japan	3.7955	3.6					

SPORT

Tyson's primitive appeal primes fascination

A PRETTY SAFE bet is that more airtime and column inches will be given this weekend to Mike Tyson's plea for the restoration of his boxing licence than world title defences by two of the sport's leading champions, Evander Holyfield and Oscar de la Hoya.

In drawing almost as many reporters to Las Vegas as would be expected there for a major fight promotion, Tyson's appearance before the Nevada State Athletic Commission 15 months after it suspended him indefinitely for sinking teeth into one of Holyfield's ears tells boxing more than it wants to hear.

Never in a more parlous state than it is presently, lacking genuine personalities and beset by main-

ly spurious championship contests, professional boxing has no figure with the appeal of an utterly discredited former heavyweight champion who was twice out-fought by Holyfield.

Much admiration was held out for Holyfield in those contests, but general indifference to a defence of the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation titles against Vaughn Bean at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on Saturday confirms that he is not automatically a crowd puller.

The same can be said about Lennox Lewis, who is putting up his World Boxing Council heavyweight championship against Zeljko Mavrovic, of Croatia, in Connecticut on 26 September.

Mavrovic is unbeaten but as the combined total of victories recorded by his 30 victims is no higher than 27 per cent indifference to this one is even more understandable.

In the same ring - both camps can be held to account for failing to agree on a unification bout - Holyfield and Lewis would post healthy pay-per-view numbers but their presence individually does not guarantee an audience. That Lewis is defending on a native American reservation, not one of the main boxing centres, speaks for itself.

The remark of a veteran Ameri-

cynical even for my taste, but his view that Tyson still dwarfs them in public estimation is more fact than opinion.

Discouragingly for anyone who

was drawn to the rough old game by impressions of inherent nobility, fascination with Tyson springs more from his violent assaults on decent behaviour than anything he has achieved in the ring.

Since there is no doubt at all that the return of Tyson's licence would restore him as boxing's most marketable figure, the relevant question is whether the sport has a future in the coming millennium.

The signs are not good. Hostage to television and therefore exploitations of ludicrous hyperbole, boxing attempts to serve a generation that places it in the thespian realm of professional wrestling.

De la Hoya's defence of the World Boxing Council welter-

weight title against Julio Cesar Chavez in Las Vegas tomorrow calls the sport further into question.

One of the great modern champions with more than 100 victories and only two defeats, Chavez, now 36, is given no chance against De la Hoya, who stopped him in four rounds two years ago.

Two weeks ago a bloated Roberto Duran had to be rescued from a battering by William Joppy in a farcical challenge for the World Boxing Association middleweight championship. Arguably the greatest fight lightweight in history, Duran is 47 years old. The once terrific Ghanaian super-featherweight Azumah Nelson is still fighting in his 40th year; losing more often than he wins.

History shows that plenty of champions have gone on past their time - Sugar Ray Robinson is the saddest example - but never before in such numbers.

If boxing's ills relate directly to the proliferation of self-serving organisations and television's preoccupation with mainly bogus titles, then public taste comes into it, too.

In Tyson's case it is what a friend with many hours logged at ringside refers to as the "King Kong syndrome". It is not Tyson the fighter people see but Tyson the primitive.

The word is that Nevada will look favourably on Tyson's plea. That is a compromise, not a solution.

Cricket: Birkenshaw's bonding has produced a Leicestershire team on the brink of another Championship

Wells and Lewis tap into spirit of unity

BY JON CULLEY

seas player, the redoubtable West Indian, Phil Simmons, has had an unremarkable year.

What they do have, however, is a wide spread of players who are not great but who are better than good. No batsman, for example, has 1,000 Championship runs; but Ben Smith has 961, two others have 800-plus and four others around 500 each. And no bowler has taken 70 wickets; but after Mullally, on 57, six others average close to 30 each.

This compares unfavourably with 1996, when four batsmen topped 1,000 runs and five bowlers more than 40 wickets. Yet if they come out on top over the next four days, this season's side will have won more matches - 11 against 10.

The secret, if there is one, apart from having a side undisturbed by Test calls, is that Birkenshaw and his first lieutenant, captain James Whitaker, have fostered and maintained a one-for-all team culture to which few others come close.

Vince Wells, the 33-year-old all-rounder who spent three frustrating years trying to make progress with Kent, appreciates this factor more than most.

"One of the things that is special about this team is that we get on very well with each other as friends as well as team-mates," he said. "Players often spend time together off the field as well as on it. Often within a county side cliques develop and some players feel left out, but that does not exist here."

"As a result, I think the players here are that little bit more keen to do well for the team, and want to play together and want to succeed together."

Wells, in some ways, is Birkenshaw's ideal player: an all-round team man as capable of winning a match with the ball as the bat. His record going into the final round is



Jack Birkenshaw (right), the Leicestershire manager, is his team's pivotal figure at The Oval yesterday as they prepare for today's decisive match Peter Jay

802 Championship runs at 36.45 and 34 wickets from his medium-pace bowling at a miserly 14.79. Opportunities had been so limited for him at Kent before his arrival at Grace Road in 1992 that his transfer was hardly a headline-making event. Yet Birkenshaw had identified in him just the qualities he believed were essential in the side he wanted to build.

"He always had good style," Birkenshaw said. "He hit the ball cleanly, timed it well; and he had a good bowling action."

"But I could tell also he would have the right attitude. He had been a footballer so he was likely to be a good competitor and I felt he wanted to play if he could only find an opportunity."

"He had not had that at Kent. If people don't believe in you and you are always looking over your shoulder, it is difficult to be at your best. A player's character in many ways is as important as his ability and I sensed he had the character I was looking for."

In view of such comments, it was

surprising to see Birkenshaw re-engage the maverick talents of Chris Lewis, the England all-rounder whose undoubted class has been hindered frequently by problems of temperament.

Yet Lewis, who will relish the chance to outshine his former Surrey colleagues, has made important contributions to bringing Leicestershire to the brink of a second title in three seasons, as batsman, bowler and stand-in captain. Few who were present will forget his astonishing performance against

Northamptonshire at Grace Road in July when Leicestershire chased an improbable 204 runs in 20 overs to win - and pulled it off. That triumph was thanks largely to Wells making a half-century of 25 balls and Lewis hitting an unbeaten 71 in a mere 33.

They will, collectively, need to play above themselves between now and Sunday evening, against a Surrey side driven by Alec Stewart's desire to complete a memorable summer by helping his county win the title for the first time since his father led them to glory in 1971.

Simmons' men in pole position for pennant.

FOUR DAYS, three teams and a Championship. If the phrase sounds like the title of a blockbuster film the glamour will be strictly localised as cricket's equivalent of the Premiership is concluded in front of less than full houses at The Oval and Old Trafford.

Three teams - Leicestershire, Surrey and Lancashire - head the running for the Championship pennant, still the most highly regarded domestic competition. But if the kudos remains, the prize money - £10,000 to be shared among the winning team - is piffling, amounting as it does to about a month's salary for a footballer plying his trade with one of Britain's leading clubs.

Of the trio fighting for the spoils, only Leicestershire, who lead Surrey and Lancashire by nine and 11 points respectively, can conceivably win by

BY DEREK PRINGLE
Cricket Correspondent

drawing - their match is against second-placed Surrey.

To prevail that way would rely on Lancashire winning with fewer than full bonus points against Hampshire. As this is the easier of the two matches, on paper if not meteorologically, Phil Simmons' men would probably be advised to win first and leave the contingencies to those below them.

Bonus points apart, the other imponderable is the early autumn weather. Domestic cricket desperately needs exciting grand finales like this and it would be a pity if the whole thing were to be rendered disappointingly predictable by persistent downpour. So far the forecast is for rain on Friday.

Leicestershire, the only side in the top three playing away, will, nevertheless, be favourites to secure the trophy they won two years ago. With five victories in a row, their momentum is as impressive as their pace bowling which, providing an extra spinner is not required, knows it has one more important assignment to complete.

Alan Mullally, Chris Lewis and James Ormond versus Mark Butcher, Alec Stewart and possibly Graham Thorpe is about as good a contest between bat and ball as it gets in England outside a Test. Forget cricket's antediluvian reputation as the gentleman's game, the next few days under the gasometer promises to be a beheading and ill-tempered contest.

Surrey, who last won the Championship in 1971 when Alec Stewart's

father, Mickey, was captain, will be without their leading bowler, the Pakistan off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq. With The Oval one of the few places to help spinners this summer, Saqlain's departure to the super-financial Sahara Cup in Toronto is a callous slight on his team-mates and further blights the merits of counties hiring expensive overseas players.

As Surrey's chief match-winner for the last two matches with a bad back, is expected to be fit to renew his battles with Hampshire's West Indian fast bowler Nixon McLean. Lancashire managed to come second in Atherton's first year at the club in 1987 and it remains a burning ambition of his, despite absentmindedness, to win the Championship.

John Crawley, next year's captain, will also be fire up, and baring disaster and some prolific scoring from Steve James or Carl Hooper, will finish with the season's highest aggregate of first-class runs. Whether he has a Championship medal to go with it really depends on Surrey and Leicestershire fighting each other to a standstill.

possible now that wins and losses are taken into account, should the points be level.

Michael Atherton, missing for the last two matches with a bad back, is expected to be fit to renew his battles with Hampshire's West Indian fast bowler Nixon McLean. Lancashire managed to come second in Atherton's first year at the club in 1987 and it remains a burning ambition of his, despite absentmindedness, to win the Championship.

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CHAMPIONSHIP CONTENDERS

TOP OF THE TABLE

	P	W	L	D	Pts
Leics	16	10	0	6	268
Surrey	16	10	4	2	259
Lancs	16	10	1	5	257

Remaining fixtures (starting today):
The Oval: Surrey v Leicestershire.
Old Trafford: Lancashire v Hampshire.

POINTS AVAILABLE

Sixteen for a victory (three for a draw) plus a maximum of eight bonus points in the first 120 overs of the first 10 innings (four for batting, four for bowling). Bonus points are awarded for reaching 200 (one), 250 (two), 300 (three) and 350 (four) and for taking 3-4 wickets (one), 5-6 (two), 7-8 (three) and 9-10 (four).

Repertory ready to stage repeat

By Greg Wood

THE MOST interesting punting medium so far this week has been Ladbrokes' share price, as speculation continues as to whether the company will be allowed to keep the Coral chain which it acquired a few months ago. Not so today, however, as Newbury stages three Listed events, all of them worth £50,000, and though it may be optimistic to describe one of them as an Arc Trial, this is still about as competitive as this level of racing ever gets.

Then again, since this is just the second running of the Doubleprint Arc Trial, it is probably too early to judge, and it is only fair to the admirable Posidonas to point out that Swain, the finest middle-distance horse in Europe, was among his victims when he won the inaugural race 12 months ago. Of more immediate concern is the implication that Posidonas is a good thing today, since there is nothing of similar calibre among his rivals. As ever, the reality is more complicated. Swain was giving away half a stone last

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Life Of Riley
(Newbury 4.10)
NB: Cathedral
(Newbury 3.40)

out and is best watched today. One runner who is in good form, though, is Scored (3.10), who was second in a German Group Three last time out and before that just a length behind Nedawi, the subsequent St Leger winner, in an unusually strong Listed race at Haydock.

This is a difficult one, though, and the supporting events offer better opportunities. The Dubai

and from that draw we can do our usual jump-and-run. He's a big, strong horse too, so he'll be able to stay on. It's hard to assess John Gosden's filly Zelanda, the winner of her last three races, but I always think that three-year-olds have to be really good to beat older horses. He's in good form, which is the thing with sprinters, and it certainly makes a change from Nottingham and Bath."

Zelanda is also drawn on the outside, in two, which is hardly ideal. Coral will lay you 10-1 about REPERTORY (nap 3.40) this morning, and that is a price worth having.

There is a decent bet at odds of 20 in the Dubai Duty Free Cup too, in the shape of Danish Rhapsody (next best 2.40) at 8-1 (Ladbrokes). Lady Herries' runner was unimpressive in Germany last time, but had previously finished an outstanding second to Multatir at this course and distance. In the stayers' handicap, Life Of Riley (4.10) could take a great deal of passing.

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and would have earned his connections a five-figure bonus.

If the draw was unkinked, though, it could hardly have been more friendly today.

Repertory will set out from stall 11, with only Proud Native,

who is usually slowly away, be-

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Uefa Cup: Liverpool look the only certain qualifiers after another tense night for English football

Villa owe a big debt to Vassell

By PHIL SHAW

FOR A league which likes to see itself as the best in the world, the FA Carling Premiership endured patchy results in the Uefa Cup's first round, first leg matches. Its Scottish equivalent, forced into ever more anguished European inquests during the 90s, once enjoyed the better of things.

After a night when the unlikely name of Darius Vassell hogged the headlines following his dramatic introduction at Villa Park, only one of the English quartet appear assured of progress. Liverpool won 3-0 at Kosice of Slovakia with another, more familiar substitute also having an instant impact. Robbie Fowler created a goal with his first touch in competitive action for seven months.

Aston Villa and Leeds United needed late goals – three in Villa's case – to ensure they take an advantage to Norway and Madeira respectively. Blackburn Rovers, by contrast, succumbed to Lyons in the final minutes, yet Rangers earned a draw at a similar stage in Israel and Celtic put internal strife behind them to prevail in Portugal.

Villa, top of the domestic pile, trailed Stromsgodset 2-0 after 82 minutes. If their tactical naivety in the first half did not augur well for a repeat of last season's run to the quarter-finals, their refusal to accept the seemingly inevitable was testament to the spirit fostered by John Gregory's management.

Vassell's goals, 10 seconds from the end of normal time and with the game's last kick, sealed an incredible 3-2 win. The 18-year-old Brummie, associated with Villa since he was 12, used to cheer Dwight Yorke from the Holte End. A week ago he drew comparisons with his hero after his second goal for England's youth team against the Republic of Ireland.

Vassell is one of several young players vying to join Lee



Darius Vassell celebrates after scoring his second goal and Aston Villa's winner against Stromsgodset in the Uefa Cup on Tuesday

Gascoigne victim of muddled thinking

PAUL GASCOIGNE may be hailed in some quarters as a footballing genius, but public perception of his powers of rational thought are less than flattering according to a survey which rates the Middlesbrough and former England midfielder as Britain's least intelligent person.

The often troubled player polled 31 per cent and topped the list ahead of the model Melinda Messenger, who polled 10 per cent of the votes. Antoinette Turner, the former Lottery presenter, came third with eight per cent, closely followed by the Democratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley and the former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell.

The same research revealed the Virgin tycoon Richard Branson is seen as the country's most intelligent person, securing a 20 per cent backing and pipping the author Stephen Hawking into second place by one per cent.

Carol Vorderman, the numerate television presenter, finished third on 17 per cent, ahead of the wildlife expert David Attenborough and inventor Clive Sinclair.

The 1,004 people questioned for the survey for the scientific magazine Focus were also asked who they thought was the most intelligent politician in Britain.

Prime Minister Tony Blair topped the poll with 25 per cent of the votes, with Margaret Thatcher following in second place with 22 per cent.

The Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown came third with five per cent, one per cent ahead of the Chancellor Gordon Brown and former Prime Minister John Major, who share fourth place.

As for sporting figures, the former Pakistan captain Imran Khan heads the list with 17 per cent of the poll, with the ex-England striker and television presenter Gary Lineker two per cent behind.

FOCUS MAGAZINE POLL: Five most intelligent personalities in Britain (Figure in parentheses): 1 Paul Gascoigne (31); 2 Melinda Messenger (10); 3 Antoinette Turner (8); 4 Ian Paisley (7); 5 Geri Halliwell (6). Top five most intelligent politicians: 1 Tony Blair (25); 2 Margaret Thatcher (22); 3 John Major (5); 4 Gordon Brown (4); 5 Paddy Ashdown (4).

Vega bites at Pleat's decision

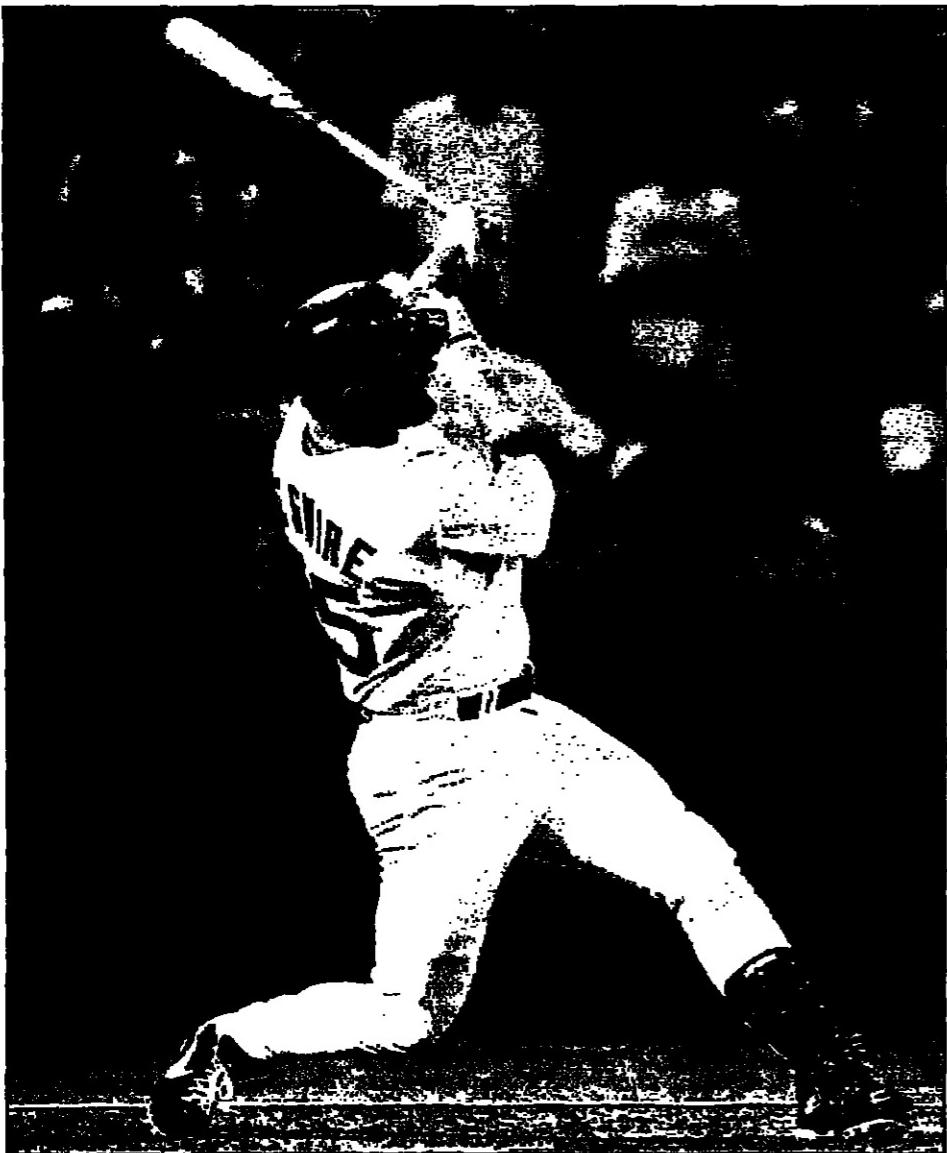
RAMON VEGA hit out at David Pleat, Tottenham's caretaker-manager, after scoring the winning goal in Spurs' Worthington Cup second round first leg game at Brentford on Tuesday.

Pleat insisted that Pleat was wrong to drop him from the team which lost to Middlesbrough on Sunday. The much-maligned Swiss international defender spared Spurs' blunders with a powerful header for their third goal at Griffin Park, before denouncing Pleat.

"Getting the winner here was the perfect reply to me being dropped," Vega said. "The manager was wrong to leave me out of the last game and this was my way of telling him. Now I am determined to fight on and win over the fans."

Vega has had a torrid time at White Hart Lane so far this season. He was the victim of the boos in the club's opening home game of the season, which they lost to Sheffield Wednesday, and has also been accused of receiving preferential treatment from his fellow countryman Christian Gross, the club's last manager.

"I have had a lot of stick but I have had to face it. We all make mistakes but mine have been highlighted because I am a defender," Vega said. "As for people saying I was privileged, my relationship with Christian was nothing special. I don't see why people make this connection just because we are both Swiss. Does it mean English managers favour English players? Of course not."



Mark McGwire hits home run No 63 in St Louis on Tuesday AP

McGwire moves one up on Sosa

MARK McGWIRE, the St Louis Cardinals slugger, hit his 63rd home run of the season on Tuesday night, extending the all-time record and pulling one ahead of Chicago Cubs' Sammy Sosa.

McGwire hit a solo home run to left-centre field off Jason

Mari's 37-year-old record of 61 a week ago, hit the pitch 385 feet. "People cheer 'come on Mark, we want you to hit one.' Boom, he hits it," said Tony La Russa, the Cardinals manager. "How he does it, I have no idea. He is just remarkable."

Chelsea's rota system frustrates Laudrup

By PHIL CASEY

on the receiving end of himself when Ruud Gullit was coach.

"I have been to a meeting with Vialli and the other forwards at the club," Laudrup said as Chelsea prepared to entertain the Swedish side, Helsingborg, tonight. "Vialli said that he regards us all as stars and that we actually each of us should play every single time, but he would not give any guarantees to any of us."

"His message was that none of us can feel secure of a spot in the starting line-up and of course that's a new situation for me that I have to get used to. I didn't like the same system at Milan, and the big danger is that some players might never find the right rhythm." Indeed, Chelsea have so far

failed to find the rhythm that took them to two cup triumphs last year. Laudrup puts that down to a lack of playing time for the team to gel together and is desperate to get as much match practice as possible to prove his worth.

"I need all the playing time that I can possibly get right now because it was a big problem in my league debut that my teammates didn't know me and I didn't know them," he said. "I was criticised for my debut but please notice I played in a strange role in right midfield which is not my favourite space at all."

"I think that Vialli has already seen that the best space for me is as the free runner behind the forwards like I played for Rangers and Denmark."

"Physically I am fit but I lack

a bit in timing and only playing big matches will help me now."

Vialli has an almost full squad to choose from, with only Dan Petrescu missing through suspension. The captain, Dennis Wise, is available again after his three-match ban following his dismissal against Atletico Madrid in a pre-season tournament.

Though Chelsea should have little problem squeezing past the Swedish part-timers, they have been taking no chances for tonight's first leg, spending Tuesday after training studying videos of the Swedish side.

"When you don't know one player from the other team you have to be careful," Marcel Desailly, another of Chelsea's foreign summer signings, said yesterday. "Sometimes they have surprises."

Jones moans about slackers

DAVE JONES, the manager of Southampton, has told his experienced players "you've let me down" in the club's terrible start to the season.

Southampton were one of the most improved sides in the league last year and finished a creditable 12th in the Premiership table, but they are now bottom of the Premiership after five successive defeats, including a 5-0 thrashing by Charlton.

It took the substitute James Beattie to score his first goal for the club to salvage a draw against Fulham, of the Second

Division, in the Worthington Cup second-round, first-leg at Craven Cottage on Tuesday.

Jones was grateful just not to lose for the first time this season but blamed the club's senior professionals for a run of results that has seen his side become relegation favourites.

"We have some good young players here, but it's my experienced ones who are not performing at the minute," Jones said. "My chairman gives me his full backing as do the board, and I just want the backing of the players because I'll give them everything I can."

"Confidence has been dent ed, and I feel like I've been kicked from pillar to post. When expectations are high, like they were after last year, you're wondering why it's gone wrong. It's only the players that can pull themselves out of it."

"No game is ever going to be easy now. It's hard to keep bat tling, but that's what we have to do. The players are baffled as everyone else why it's gone wrong."

Jones did not name names on Tuesday, but it was clear which players he thinks have not delivered so far this season.

Against Fulham, Mark Hughes barely touched the ball; Egil Ostenstad and David Howells both limped off; and Stuart Ripley was ineffective apart from the pass that led to Beattie's equaliser.

Matt Le Tissier, making only his second start of the season, was also anonymous and, as Jones admitted, still looks unfit. "He did okay in spells but as I've said all along he isn't fully fit. He has had a traumatic 12 months as everybody knows and he just has to keep working at it like everybody else," the manager explained.

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GREAT PRESSURE IS NOT TO BE FEARED

CONTINENTAL

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SPORT

FOSTER'S GOLD MEDAL DAY P23 • JACK'S LADS IN TITLE SHOWDOWN P22

Shearer: 'I'm staying at Newcastle'

ALAN SHEARER has reaffirmed his future with Newcastle United after talks with his manager, Rund Gullit.

Aston Villa had been linked with a move for the England captain after Gullit said he would be prepared to leave him out of the side if it suited either the club or the player. The Independent Newcastle United Supporters' Association pleaded for Shearer to make it clear he was staying at St James' Park.

"If I comment on speculation every time it is written, I would be in the press all the time and I would rather concentrate on preparing for my football," Shearer said. "However, because the fans have specifically asked, I can say that I've spoken with the chairman [Freddy Shepherd] and the manager and they have told me that they see me as an important part of Newcastle's future."

"The manager feels that my strength is scoring goals but he realises that I am the type of striker who needs service. I have no doubt that the manager came here to win things just as I did."

Gullit was delighted by

FOOTBALL

BY ALAN NIXON

Shearer's comments, but as far as the Dutchman was concerned the matter had been dealt with at the weekend when he publicly backed the striker.

Gullit said: "It was already an end when I said it last Saturday but I have the feeling people were thinking on behalf of me or something like that."

He added: "He was happy before the [Southampton] game and his attitude could be seen out on the pitch. So that didn't change even when there was certain speculation."

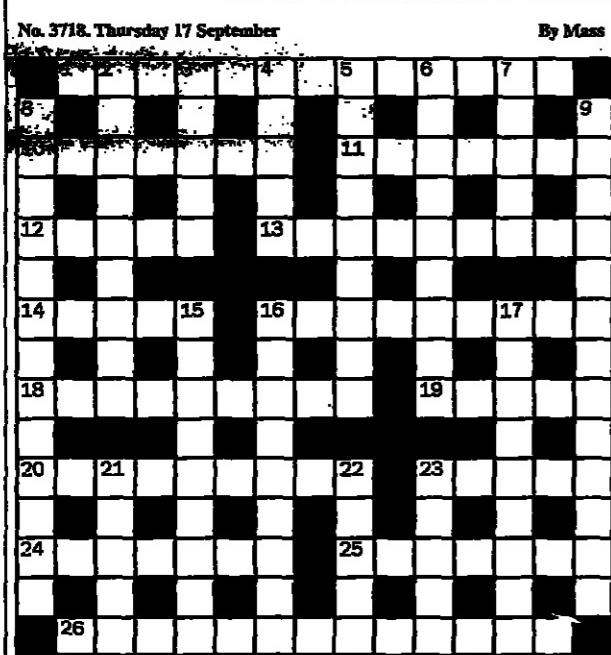
At the EGM, Johnson said: "Just before Howard left he paid out £1.6m on John Spencer. Doesn't that say it all?"

Other Kendall signings are also upset and want to know about their futures. However, Gareth Farrelly and Carl Tiler are already available for sale.

Sheffield United's chairman, Mike McDonald, is considering a possible takeover that could see him leave the Bramall Lane club. McDonald is looking at offers from three consortiums after rejecting a bid from a director, Kevin McCabe.

More football, pages 26 and 27

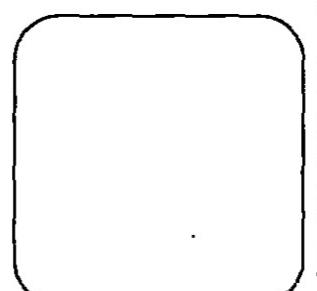
THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD



By Mass

Wednesday's solutions

ATTEMPT LEGLESS
PHONE OOP
PROCRASTINATOR
AMETITIS A
REAP CAVES SCOT
ESL TRPOO
LIGNITE STAMPER
R M R A
AVARICE AURALLY
TDY LIYILE
YOGA CAPRI GALA
ARSHAWN DOUR
CRICKETPAVILION
HNEVILS S
ENDEMIC STEAMER



- ACROSS**
- A boundary characteristic of the Oval (13)
 - A Drunk reeling a bit? (7)
 - Captain's love for Northern fishy food (7)
 - Suggested action: half million should be returned (5)
 - Service satisfied, including a garnish (9)
 - Lectured about Liberal issue (5)
 - It's the custom for right back to face a wing, they say (9)
 - Lack of interest in a European firm (9)
 - Strains whole back on short slippery surface (5)
- DOWN**
- Rerieved from hanging (9)
 - Pound edible seeds (5)
 - Instruments rendering one note after another imbued with swing (7)
 - Limits drink consumed by belliscose figure (7)
 - Creature with glands, eg, oddly mutating (4-4)
 - One short of nap, at least (9)
 - Got along quietly in school (5)
 - Figure little girl should get over revolting outburst? (5)
 - Show people around harbour (9)

- 7** A basket, say? (9)
Plant bay round lake (5)
8 Stops tum aches with treatment - or these (7,6)
9 In line? (7-6)
15 Musicians with a Prom engagement, perhaps (5-4)
16 Routine work study male's introduced (9)
17 Cutting off, snubbing one, is offensive (9)
21 Chappie's leading academic a dance (5)
22 Beast's tick-infested burrow (5)
23 Risk in poker initially raising the money (5)

Oscar de la Hoya, the World Boxing Association welterweight champion, faces the press during the build-up to tomorrow's fight against the challenger, Julio Cesar Chavez, in Las Vegas

Reuters

Chavez vows to be 'warrior'

BOXING

BY TIM DAHLBERG

spect when they meet in the scheduled 12-round bout for De La Hoya's WBC welterweight title. "If it was up to me, this one wouldn't even be in the record books," De La Hoya said. "I'm fighting for the respect he didn't show me the first time. That's how personal this one is. A fighter like him will never admit he lost. The only way for me to get him to admit defeat is a devastating knockout."

In their first fight, De La Hoya sliced open Chavez's face, then beat him to a pulp until the fight was stopped in the fourth round. Chavez claimed afterwards that he sustained a cut over his eye while playing with

his young son the week before and that he would have never lost if the cut had not reopened.

Paul Ingle is set to become the latest British boxer to attempt to capture the hearts of American fight fans. Following Naseem Hamed's Madison Square Garden debut last December, Joe Calzaghe is due to make his US bow before the end of the year.

And now Frank Maloney, Ingle's promoter, has two December dates in mind for Ingle's move across the Atlantic - as part of a prospective bill headed by Lennox Lewis.

Ingle must first be successful in his challenge for Billy Hardy's European featherweight title at the Barbican Centre, York, on 26 September.

Maloney has big plans for

Ingle, but he remains cautious about unveiling them as he sees Hardy as a big enough challenge not to take things for granted.

"We're making big plans for Patrick Mullings before his fight in Scarborough in August, and he lost," Maloney said.

The one thing I don't do is dismiss Billy Hardy. He's been in the lion's den a number of times and people keep writing him off, but he comes back."

Hardy revels in his underdog role. "I'd love to be written off, but it never happens," he said.

"I'm sure there is a lucrative deal out there for me as well. All this talk has made me more determined. It's going to be a hard fight and whoever forsakes all the pain and digs the deepest will come out ahead."

The superb York bill also includes the British bantamweight clash between Drew Dooley and Paul Lloyd, plus Crawford Ashley's European light-heavyweight title bout with French-based Joe Sibang.

Another barrier in the way of Ingle's appearance on a Lennox Lewis undercard is Zeljko Mavriovici. Lewis defends his WBC heavyweight title against the Croat in Connecticut on the same night.

Maloney warned: "He [Mavriovici] is a much better fighter than Shannon Briggs [Lewis's last opponent] and he is very underestimated."

"Lennox was distracted last time, but he's been superb in training and he will never fight like that again."

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THURSDAY REVIEW

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Neville Elder

God's own spin doctor

If you came across Nicky Gumbel in his native Knightsbridge, you'd hardly notice him. He's a neatly dressed, nicely groomed, politely spoken 43-year-old, good-looking in a boyish way but otherwise an unremarkable product of the upper-class mould. You certainly wouldn't suspect that he was in any way out of the ordinary.

Yet this is a man who numbers his admirers in hundreds of thousands. If they're to be believed, he's one of the most extraordinary men of his age – a latter-day John Wesley, at the very least. He's certainly extraordinary in his ambition: he's aiming to do for the Church of England what Peter Mandelson did for the Labour Party – drag it into the modern world and, through sheer force of presentational skill, restore it to its former power and glory. More extraordinary still, he's showing signs of success.

You've probably seen some of the signs: a £1m advertising campaign, unleashed this week, drawing our attention to something called the Alpha Programme. If that doesn't mean much to you, don't worry: by the end of this week, around one million households should have received invitations to go on the Alpha Course, a 15-session, 10-week introduction to the basics of Christianity. Ultimately, it is planned that everyone in Britain should be invited. Already, the number of people who have done the course is thought to have passed 1.5 million, more than half of them in Britain. In a country where the average Sunday sees scarcely one million people attend Church of England services, that's a significant figure. Six thousand of Britain's 24,000-odd Christian churches (of all denominations) are active participants in the Alpha programme; 4,000 are involved in (and are financially supporting) the current campaign; and the Archbishop of Canterbury has "wholeheartedly" commended it. None of which may be enough to turn Britain back into a Christian nation, but it's not a bad start.

The man behind this revolution, you might think, must be a spiritual tiger, a roaring prophet in the cast of Ian Paisley. Yet Gumbel, as befits a man of God in the New Labour age, is an altogether svelter creature, as smooth-edged as a breakfast television presenter. His background is inoffensive, to the point of blandness. The son of two atheist lawyers, he grew up in the parish of Holy Trinity Brompton – Britain's richest parish church, and, in the religious sense, one of its most charismatic. He has spent most of his life in the area, one of his longest sojourns beyond it being his time at Eton,

where his hobbies included trying to persuade Christian pupils that their faith was absurd. At Cambridge, he read economics and law, had five close friends called Nicky, and was drawn to Christianity for the first time in a fairly undramatic way ("Some of my friends were getting interested, and I just started reading the New Testament and couldn't put it down"). He then returned to Knightsbridge, spent six years as a barrister, married – he now has three teenage children – and became an increasingly active member of the congregation at Holy Trinity Brompton. "I don't think," he says politely, "that there can be many people out there who could tell you that I did awful things in my youth."

In 1983, partly as a result of an encounter with an American evangelist who told him that he had "a gift for telling people about Jesus", he gave up his career at the Bar to train for the priesthood – "to the horror of my parents". His first job after his ordination, in 1986, was as curate of Holy Trinity Brompton, which by this time was acquiring a national reputation for its rather un-British approach to evangelism. Some eight years earlier, one of Gumbel's predecessors, Charles Marnham, had developed a series of talks designed to bolster the faith of existing church-goers – the Alpha programme. These talks were given in conjunction with informal meals and small discussion groups, with the option of a weekend away at the end of the programme; those who went through the course might in due course help to administer it themselves. By 1990, a few hundred committed Christians had tried Alpha. Then Gumbel was put in charge.

Gumbel realised that the real potential of such a programme was as a way of recruiting non-church-goers, and he re-thought, re-wrote and re-packaged it with this in mind. Everything was made more "non-church-goer-friendly" and "non-threatening": jargon was replaced by jokes, piety by human warmth; reactions to the talks were monitored by questionnaires and modified accordingly (shades of the focus group); and public interest in the course "simply exploded". Churches all over Britain – and, eventually, the world – began to ask for details, and, in due course, the revised material was committed to books, audiotapes and videos, written by and starring Gumbel, with lots of "study guides" and "manuals" to back them up. Today, Nicky Gumbel governs the Alpha empire from an office block adjoining Holy Trinity Brompton, employing around 100 people in an operation that spends nearly £750,000 a year, which comes out of Holy Trinity Brompton's astonishing annual income from

An opportunity
to explore
the meaning of life.
www.alpha.org.uk

BY RICHARD
ASKWITH

This week, the Alpha
Programme began its
big-budget rebrand of
a world-famous but
sadly diminished
product. Its name?
Christianity. And
behind the relaunch?

Nicky Gumbel,
the Church of
England's answer to
Peter Mandelson

donations and investments of £2.3m – on materials alone. (The cost of actually running the programmes is usually met by voluntary donations from participants.) Gumbel also puts on up to 50 conferences a year around the world for churches that want to learn how to use the Alpha programme.

According to Sandy Millar, vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton (and another Old Etonian ex-barrister), Gumbel's Alpha has provided overworked, uninspired vicars with an alternative to their usual response to non-believers who express curiosity about Christianity: "which is simply to say come along on Sunday – often with disastrous results." A pre-prepared programme of tried and tested talks on fundamental matters of faith ensures that thousands of churches remain smoothly on message, while modern media and marketing methods ensure that the programme can be disseminated with breathtaking efficiency. (Check out the countless Alpha websites on the Internet.) Gumbel may not get time to perform more than the occasional wedding or funeral in his capacity as curate, yet he's running an ideological machine of stunning power. In a sense, he's God's minister without portfolio.

A non-smoking, near-teetotal keep-fit enthusiast who spends most of his waking hours working – "although I don't really think of it as work" – Gumbel is tall and dark, performs well on video, and seems to be adored by many female Alpha enthusiasts. But he owes his impact less to any unique vision or cast of character than to the fact that, like Mandelson, he has faced up to and focused on problems that needed solving – most notably the fact that non-believers tend to see the church as boring and irrelevant – and worked on them with unrelenting energy and thoroughness. "Nicky's legal background is very helpful," says Millar, "in enabling him to isolate the key issues and to attempt to deal with them in a way that people can understand." It may be no accident that one of Gumbel's most prominent colleagues – who has just taken over Alpha's New York office – is Alistair Hanna, a former director of McKinsey's management consultants. Nor are the comparisons with Mandelson entirely fanciful. "I think," says Gumbel, "that one should try and learn as much as possible from areas of life outside the church. I would look at any political party and say: 'what can we learn from what they're doing?'"

Yet it would be mean to push the similarities with the Prince of Darkness too far, if only because the Devil is, in a real sense, one of Gumbel's *hôtes noirs*. "There are very good reasons to believe in his existence," he says of Satan in *Questions of Life*, the bestselling book based on his Alpha talks. "Any kind of theology which ignores the existence of a personal devil has a great deal to explain." He takes an equally fundamental line in other areas. "Does God Still Heal?" is the title of one of the Alpha talks; the answer is a literal and unambiguous yes. Alpha thoroughly disapproves of divorce, abortion, homosexuality and sex outside marriage. As for the direct workings of the Holy Spirit: "The gift of tongues has brought great blessing to many people."

This is the controversial side of Alpha. In 1994, Gumbel was associated with the arrival in Britain, via Holy Trinity Brompton, the phenomenon widely known as the Toronto Blessing (although Gumbel prefers to call it "The present movement of the Spirit" that began at Toronto Airport Vineyard church in January 1994). The "blessing" involves mass outbreaks of speaking in tongues, sometimes in conjunction with fainting and being "slain in the spirit". For enthusiasts, it can easily become the most important aspect of their faith. Critics of the Alpha programme have claimed that subscribing to Alpha means buying into the whole charismatic Toronto package. In fact, direct references to the phenomenon have now been removed from Alpha (most of whose material was written before 1994). But in practice, there's often a fair bit of speaking with tongues at the programme's climactic weekend session.

What is beyond doubt is that Gumbel, Holy Trinity Brompton and Alpha all stand for a charismatic version of Christianity that would go down in many Anglican churches like guacamole at a Rotherham working men's club. There may be little scriptural or theological justification for the Anglican church's traditionally half-hearted approach to matters of literal and supernatural belief. None the less, that's how hundreds of thousands of old-fashioned Anglicans like it. "The Church is like... a feast and a celebration," says Gumbel in one Alpha talk, "and at a party everyone has a good time. There's fun, there's laughter... Paul says, 'don't get drunk with wine, be filled with the Spirit. Come to a party where you can get drunk on God'... I was at a party like that last night... It was a party thrown by the Holy Spirit. It was a fun place to be." You can just feel the Church Fete Committee wincing.

But Gumbel seems set to have the last laugh. For much of the 1990s, the Church of England has been losing members at a rate of 1,000 a week. If he has the secret of putting bums back on pews – as his detractors most certainly have not – then tomorrow's C of E may well belong to him. This week's campaign could be a flavour of the church to come.

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EDUCATION

Ban on Viagra

Sir: I find it difficult to understand on what basis Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, has banned the use of Viagra on the NHS. Many treatments (probably the majority) within the Health Services are not life-saving or for serious illness but instead are for the improvement of the patient's quality of life. Many of these treatments, like Viagra, are not cheap.

If the NHS and Department of Health have decided to limit effective and available treatments, presumably on financial grounds, then this issue should be the subject of debate within Parliament, the medical profession and the public at large. I believe this to be the first time in the history of the NHS that a Health Secretary has acted in such a totalitarian manner.

This issue has left the medical profession, specialists and GPs alike, in an untenable position. Never before have deserving patients been asked to have an NHS consultation but then been told that for the best treatment in their case they will have to pay per tablet. The belief that doctors may prescribe Viagra as a recreational drug is totally ridiculous. Do we write prescriptions for heroin just because the patient asks for it?

The Government saw this issue coming but chose to ignore it. It is the medical profession and patients that will suffer from their inept and tardy attitude.

RICHARD PEASCY FRCS

Bristol

Sir: Since alcohol ingestion is the biggest single reason for impotence and since it is a recreational drug, why not sell Viagra over the counter in public bars as a recreational antidote.

HUGH E C GORMLEY

Barrister,

Stratclyde

Sir: Impotence is grounds for divorce. The cost of divorce to the Exchequer greatly exceeds the possible cost of Viagra.

EUGEN HOCKENJOS

London N1

Defending jobs

Sir: Donald Macintyre writes of "Roger Lyons' tendency to blame British interest rates for every factory closure in the North-east" (Comment, 15 September).

I am on record as accepting the debilitating affects of the Asian meltdown and the Russian crisis on British manufacturing industry. Of course it is true that an industry that relies so heavily on exports will be affected by world crises.

However a reduction of interest rates will help investment, profits and exports. It is still the role of government to help the creators of wealth, even in a global economy, by controlling those economic levers it has access to.

I congratulate the Monetary Policy Committee and the Government on hitting their inflation target and hope that action is now taken to make it as easy as possible to compete in the global market by cutting interest rates. It may not solve the Asian crisis but it may help our manufacturing industry survive it.

ROGER LYONS

General Secretary

MSF

London EC1

Coronary puzzle

Sir: Jeremy Laurance interprets the World Health Organisation Monica study as showing tobacco and cholesterol to be "irrelevant" as risk factors for coronary heart disease ("Doctor, doctor - can I have a fag and a chip butty now?", 15 September). He then takes the British Heart Foundation to task for continuing to believe that they are indeed important and modifiable risk factors.

Every study that has observed the health of individuals over many years has confirmed the importance of cigarette smoking, blood pressure and blood



Apples and Pears: an apple picker contemplates taking cover as another rainstorm rolls across the North Downs

Tom Pilston

cholesterol in the development of coronary heart disease. In addition, during the last five years, several studies have clearly demonstrated that lowering blood cholesterol levels among high-risk patients reduces both death and disability from coronary heart disease.

In studies like Monica, which look at different populations through a series of snapshots over time, other factors may be at work. Jeremy Laurance raised the issue of low-grade infection as a cause of coronary heart disease. There is currently much interest in this topic but its role as a risk factor remains unproven. As he acknowledges, we believe it possible that increasing affluence in society may explain some of the decline in death from coronary disease. Whether that is due to the availability of new and expensive treatment or the ability to afford a healthier diet and more physical recreation we do not know. There is however no doubt that death from coronary artery disease is falling most rapidly in the wealthier sections of society.

We do not believe that the cause of coronary heart disease is cut and dried and have never suggested that it is completely avoidable. There is however much we can do as individuals to reduce risk and the British Heart Foundation will continue to promote this message.

Professor B L PENTECOST
Medical Director
British Heart Foundation
London W1

Sir: Jeremy Laurance is delighted at expert puzzlement over results of the World Health Organisation Monica Project, but Monica researchers would not agree that "there was no link - no link at all" between trends in standard risk factors of smoking, blood pressure and cholesterol and trends in heart disease, and that the results are "astonishing".

It is true that there is not a strong relationship, but most trends are down. This creates a statistical problem in estimating how great or how small is the contribution of known risk factors, and therefore how much room is left for other animals in the jungle.

At Monica's launch standard risk factors were known to predict individual risk within populations, but the absolute levels of risk varied between populations more than known risk factors could explain. The project asked how well trends over time in these population levels were explained by changes in standard risk factors. The answer - "not very well" - was more negative than many expected, but had we known the answer beforehand we would not have mounted the project!

Health promotion is about what is known. Many diseases of unknown causation have been controlled by entirely empirical means (eg Jenner and vaccination

against smallpox). Prevention is not all-or-nothing. It is the major risk factors which determine whether a chronic disease is common or rare and whether it occurs in young or only elderly people.

Research is about what is not known. Only a fool would use the latter as an argument for complete inaction for disregarding or going against reasonable advice. Jeremy Laurance's reaction is akin to someone who uses the news that a good driver has been killed in a car accident to justify and encourage bad driving. The Monica findings are certainly a challenge for researchers as to what exactly is going on at a population level but do not change the advice to individuals as to how they might modify their personal risk.

HUGH TUNSTALL-PEDOE
Reporteur WHO Monica Project
Cardiovascular Epidemiology
Unit
University of Dundee

The uses of science

Sir: Sir Richard Sykes ("Science must allay the public's fears", Podium, 14 September) displays exactly the limited perspective on scientific development which creates public fear. In misrepresenting the debate as one between those who are for and against science, he misses the point, which is whether science is put to good use or bad.

Greenpeace strongly supports the application of science and new technology to amend environmental problems, such as our initiatives to create markets for ozone- and climate-friendly fridges, PVC-free credit cards and renewable energy sources. We oppose misapplication of science which leads to uncontrollable environmental risks such as those posed by nuclear power and release of genetically engineered organisms, or continued investment in fossil fuel extraction technologies when we cannot

safely burn the fossil fuels we have already.

If Sir Richard wishes to allay fears he should acknowledge the real dilemmas, not pretend that all those who question the bad

applications of science have "a lack of real understanding" or see all "scientific advances as heralding Armageddon". In a recent poll

across the whole of Europe,

increased knowledge about genetic engineering led to no greater

acceptance. "Real understanding"

will not necessarily remove public

concerns, because members of the public frequently bring different values to bear.

Dr IAN E TAYLOR
Scientific Political Adviser
Greenpeace UK
London N1

After the Fringe

Sir: There is no evidence that audiences for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival have "dwindled" (report, 8 September). The Pleasance "notched up a record audience" of 150,000 this year (an increase of 17 per cent) and the Glided Balloon are up by 25 per cent. Together we sell more than a quarter of all Fringe tickets and considerably more than either the Tattoo or the International Festival.

Over two thirds of the Fringe audience (and performers) are aged between 15 and 35 and a good many of them need to be home by the beginning of September. When the last week is in September it is always a gloomy time. Of course it is better if all six August festivals in Edinburgh run concurrently.

I'm sorry that some people did less well this year but there may be other reasons for that. The numbers are a bit like my stomach. If I breathe in I look thinner, but sadly it is merely a temporary redistribution of bulk.

CHRISTOPHER RICHARDSON
Director
Pleasance Theatre Festival Ltd
London SW12

Art, or just pots?

Sir: Henry Rothschild has alerted us to the risk that Janet Leach's unique and important collection of Bernard Leach's work and documents are in danger of being lost to the nation (letter, 15 September).

If Leach had worked in any other medium than ceramics the work of this major 20th-century artist would be in the Tate Gallery. As it is the Tate continues to maintain that ceramics are craft and not art. In the Tate St Ives, work by Leach is on show, but it is work loaned from the Wingfield Digby Collection, because the Tate does not choose to own ceramics.

At the same time that your columnist David Lister is pressurising Nicholas Serota, the Tate's director, to defend modern art (Comment, 16 September), you might also ask him to say why Leach is not an artist. A wider definition might mean that the Janet Leach collection could be bought by the Tate. But Serota needs to think quickly.

The Rev TIM RUSS
St Dennis,
Cornwall

Dangers on the Net

Sir: Mark Pawelek (letter, 11 September) wrongly describes me as a "censor". I am not.

The Internet Watch Foundation does play a part in getting material which is plainly illegal removed from UK servers, but surely Mr Pawelek has no objection to that? I do also favour giving parents, teachers, employers and children themselves, the knowledge and the power to determine what sort of material might come into their home, office or classroom. That does not make me "pro-censorship". It makes me "pro-choice". You will never stop people publishing whatever they like on the Internet, but you ought to be able to intervene to protect yourself and your loved ones from unwanted intrusions. The sorts of tools we have at our disposal now to do this are woefully inadequate and IWF is working to improve them.

Mr Pawelek tells us there are only a "few idiots" who abuse the system. I wonder if Mr Pawelek would feel quite so charitable towards the "idiots" if one of his children became the victim of a paedophile whom he or she first met on the Internet.

JOHN CARR

London N19

A night in jail

Sir: Governor O'Sullivan's initiative ("A night in Brixton jail - yours for £50", 14 September) is laudable, and his project will doubtless appeal to the curiosity of the law-abiding and raise much-needed funds for the Macmillan cause. Two matters are however of pressing interest.

Why, if refurbishment of the A wing cells is complete, are they not to be used straight away for prisoner occupation? Over the summer, pressure on cell accommodation in London has been so great that prisoners are being moved outside the Metropolitan area almost every day. The 200 spaces in A wing are sorely needed to relieve pressure on the other London prisons.

Secondly, this "unique event" will doubtless require a substantial project to restore the security status of the cells after their overnight stay. Who knows what parting gifts might otherwise have been left for the official occupants? How are the extra staff, sniffer dogs, cleaning and security searches to be financed?

This public relations exercise should not be allowed to divert attention from the very real problems of prisoner numbers and their welfare, and they should come before even the most worthy of charities.

JENNIFER BALL
Chairman, Greater London Lay Observers' Panel
London SW12

Fjord squad holds Villa at home, though they run and run

WELL, IT'S been an action-packed, rip-roaring couple of nights in European football (writes our football correspondent, Rene McGriff). British clubs were in non-stop action on both evenings in what turned out to be an action-packed, rip-roaring couple of nights, no, I've used that one already, in what turned out to be a dramatic topsy-turvy couple of nights of star-studded, breathtaking European football.

And Britain can walk tall today after their first encounters with the might of the mainland. Majestic M1 Wanderers, the pride of the Midlands, were at their magisterial best in the San Serif stadium in Italy, playing their first leg against AC/DC Milan in the Champion of Champions Pay To View Cup, and coming away with a very creditable 2-1 loss.

"This may not have been the result we came for," said manager Ally Barber last night, "but it's certainly the result we are going away with, and you can't say fairer than that. We scored an away goal on the night. They didn't. That makes things very difficult for them in the second leg. It makes things very difficult for us too. More difficult for us, probably. A lot more. Well, that's football. But take nothing away from our lads. They ran and ran and ran and ran and occasionally kicked the ball too. You can't say more than that. They were magnificent. Take nothing away from these lads. I won't. That will be £400, please."

Meanwhile, on home ground, Villa Park were doing even better at their London base, where they entertained the crack Norwegian

team FC Anorak to a cliffhanger 3-3 draw.

"What can you say? Both teams scored three times," said haggard manager Bert Umber after the nail-biting last few minutes in which both sides hit the upright, though not with the ball. "Three goals on either side. Terrific entertainment. Piss-poor football, unfortunately. I'm choked. Still, I'll say this for the lads. They ran and ran and ran and ran. Unfortunately, so did the other side. I'm afraid we've got it all to do in the second leg. Terrific entertainment, though. What more can you say? I can't £300, please."

Tynegate Rovers, the pride of the North-east, travelled to Denmark to take on Hornby Dublo, the Danish champions. Unfortunately, they weren't meant to. They were meant

to travel to Turkey to take on Sporting Palkava, the Turkish cup runners-up, which means they forfeit

the first leg on away penalties and go into the second leg 5-0 down.

"It was a nightmare night for us," said manager Bill Gateshead, on a mobile phone in Copenhagen airport. "Our lads ran and ran and ran and ran, but we still couldn't get the last flight to Turkey. It's always disappointing to lose the first leg 5-0, especially when you haven't played, but I'm counting our blessings - we haven't sustained any injuries, except for young Gary Romain who pulled a muscle trying to control a luggage trolley. Still, let's look on the bright side - there's always a chance that Sporting Palkava will turn up at the wrong place like we did! £250, please - and could you bring it out here in cash? As soon as possible? We're running out of the readyies..."

Blarney Rovers, the little-fancied

Irish team, did their reputation no harm at all in the Cup Losers Cup

when they took on the might of Portugal's Sporting Faro and lost by the odd goal in seven, that is, 6-1.

"Lots of people were saying before the match that they were going to be all over us and everyone in the team was going to score against us," says manager Al Harvey. "Well, I think we've proved the walling willies wrong. There were at least five of the Portuguese lads who didn't score, and one or two of them who never looked like doing so. Great stuff by us. I think we can hold our heads high and hold our hands out for £50."

Huddlestone City completed a great night for British football when they met Ibiza Rovers in the Med Cup and only conceded three goals.

"We were unlucky to meet them in peak form," said manager Frank Fearless afterwards. "They had signed several German star holidaymakers in the close season and we weren't expecting it that. Still, they've got weaknesses too, and I think we can pull it all back in the second leg. What? There isn't a second leg? That was it? We've been knocked out of the competition? Well, Blimey O'Reilly. What can I say? I'm choked. Still, that's football for you. Make it £25 and a drink."

Late results
Cup Losers Cup
Sporting Gazebo 0 Real Meccano 0
Racing Special 0 FC Fastnet 0

European Cup
Sporting Nancy 0 Gay Vienna 0
Queens of the North 0 Disco Hanover 0

**MILES KINGTON**

"Three goals on either side. Terrific entertainment. Piss-poor football, unfortunately"

July 10 1998

PANDORA

ALWAYS READY for a scrap, Arthur Scargill threatened to walk out of Eddie George's speech to the TUC conference on Tuesday. However, it seems that Scargill did not go into the hall in the first place, making his walkout rather problematic. Pandora's efforts to reach Scargill were thwarted by the answerphone message of the National Union of Mineworkers HQ: it advises callers to write in with their enquiries. The TUC press office in Blackpool explained it would be almost impossible to get a comment from anyone at the NUM because "They hate the press because you're capitalist (expensive deleted): we like you because we're class collaborationists." Love hate, Pandora likes everybody.

YESTERDAY'S DEBATE on Europe at the TUC conference was definitely attended by Arthur Scargill. The firebrand leader certainly made his presence felt this time, saying, "As miners we are an international bunch. We shouldn't be trading with Europe, but with Cuba." Has Arthur taken a fancy to Cuban cigars?

CZECH PRESIDENT Vaclav Havel described him as a "living legend" and one of the "co-creators of a new American self-realisation" who "affected even Czech lands with his works". Praise indeed for rocker Lou Reed. At Havel's request, Reed was booked to play a 20-minute set at the White House this week. Reed's former band, The Velvet Underground, were apparently the inspiration to a number of Czech bands of the sixties including Plastic People of the Universe, who were imprisoned for their music and later recorded in secret at Havel's house. Given the problems faced by Bill Clinton, Lou ought to consider dropping his tune "Walk on the Wild Side" from the set, or else sing it in Czech.

AT THE PHARMACY launch party for his book *By Design*, actor Richard E Grant (pictured) was surrounded by happy revellers, including Twiggy and Samantha Fox (who stars with Grant and footballer Alan Shearer in the forthcoming film *The Match*). Unlike most of the crowd on Tuesday evening, Grant does not drink or smoke, belying the image he forged for himself in *Withnail and I*. How then does the actor relax? "My vices are sex, shopping and scuba diving, to be done as often as possible. Sometimes at the same time." If that's the case, his current image is pretty far out too.

JAMES KIRKMAN, art dealer to Lucien Freud for 20 years, is to have an exhibition of his own paintings at the Atrium Gallery in London next month. Freud severed relations with Kirkman in 1992 after a dispute over the commission from the sale of a portrait of Lord Rothschild. Kirkman, who looked after the affairs of John Piper and Henry Moore amongst others, took up painting five years ago, when he was 58. Currently tutored by Maggi Hambling at Morley College in London, James humbly admits, "I'm not a great genius." Perhaps not, but he has had work exhibited recently at the Royal Academy. "You will have to come along and decide for yourself. If you write anything about me, I will begin my cuttings file." Are you reaching for the scissors, James?

AS OUR Anti-Rucksack on the Tube Campaign gears up for a massive autumn offensive, a rather worrying letter reaches us. "Everyone who uses public transport should support your anti-backpack campaign; you are obviously the champion of the passenger," writes a North London reader. The lady in question warns Pandora of another scourge: trolley abuse. Beware the species of shopping trolley that is "large, surrounded by a metal cage and seems to have an unusual number of corners and spikes," used as a battering ram on buses. Our reader pleads: "If I am quoted I would like to be anonymous. I use buses frequently and don't want to be set upon by angry trolleys." What a horrible fate.

What is Britain's favourite tourist city amongst readers of *Condé Nast Traveller*? Not what you'd expect. Number one choice is Glasgow, almost in a tie for second place Chester and Newcastle. London only just managed the top 10. Come again?



Loyalty, through thick and thin

WHAT ARE friends for? Different things, depending on whether you are British or American.

This week Tony Blair told critics that he would stay loyal to his friend Bill Clinton. He didn't say "no matter what happens", but it sounded like that. "The Prime Minister doesn't dump people because some report appears on the Internet," snapped his press spokesman.

I was worried when, in February, just after the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke, Tony Blair stood in the White House and lauded Clinton's "honesty". Beside him, the statesman from Arkansas nodded and grimmed like he'd just wolfed down a double Whopper with fries.

In August, I was dismayed by the Prime Minister's take-it-on-faith endorsement of Clinton's attack on a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan.

And I was appalled a few days later when, after confessing to eight months of dishonesty, Clinton came to Omagh, where his presence seemed an insult to the memory of 29 innocent martyrs to peace.

But I have to admire Tony Blair for standing by his friend after the publication of the scurrilous Starr



PAUL SPIKE
I hope Tony understands that, in America, friends insist their greatest obligation is to themselves

report. It was the right thing to do. You don't desert your friends when they're under fire. You take friends for who they are, not who you want them to be.

So what are friends for? Tony Blair's friendship has been good for Bill Clinton: good for bolstering his reputation, for giving credence to his pack of lies, for endorsing his flawed character, for seeming to legitimise his recent act of military aggression

— one that appears more cynical as time goes by.

Bill Clinton's friendship hasn't been all that good for Tony Blair. The efforts Clinton made to bring peace to Northern Ireland would, I suspect, have been made anyway. They did not cost Clinton very much, and they satisfied the new generation of Irish-Americans who loathe terrorism and wanted to see the Troubles end on their grandparents' island. Clinton's friendship has brought Blair a raft of criticism. But, as one of my English friends said to me recently, "Friendship in this country implies an obligation". Which is why becoming someone's friend in Britain is far more difficult than it is in America.

In "friendly" America, perfect strangers beam smiles and coo "nice day" at each other in a pantomime of synthetic intimacy. It's not that Americans necessarily make bad friends; but American friendship often does not carry any obligation. Friendship is seen more as an opportunity, a way to get something, another stop on the social network. Americans can shun their friends as easily as they replace their trainers,

and sometimes when you go to parties in New York or Washington, it feels as if you are with a group of people who are all out shopping for new friends.

I learned a lot about friendship when I left New York and settled in London. It was not as if I arrived as a complete stranger. I knew several people whom I thought were good friends. These were Londoners who I had first met in places like Spain or Turkey, places where we met on an equal footing as foreigners. Later, whenever I came through London, they welcomed me into their homes, offered me gracious hospitality for days or even weeks.

Everything changed the day I said I was going to settle permanently in this country. A subtle distance suddenly entered the relationship. It wasn't frosty, but it wasn't nearly as warm a reaction as I had expected, had hoped for.

From being a visiting house-guest, a member of the family, suddenly I was someone they rang to invite to a dinner party six weeks hence. It took me a long time to adapt to this, to put aside my feelings of rejection, to understand that

I was being vetted. The vetting lasted about a year. I knew it was over when, unannounced, my London friends suddenly arrived on my doorstep bearing an armful of gifts, champagne, delicious caviar.

On the other hand, whenever I returned to New York and phoned old friends, I noticed that the first thing they asked was, "Where are you right now?" If I said I was calling from a hotel room, they'd invariably say, "Hey, let's get together tonight". If I was calling from the airport, the chance that I might need a couch to flop on for a night or two would provoke a very different response. "Hey, this is kind of a difficult week for me. How long are you staying? Maybe we can do lunch."

There is no point in resenting this difference between British and American friendships: that's just the way it is. I applaud Tony Blair for remaining true to his friend Bill. I just hope he understands that, in America, even best friends will insist that their greatest obligation is to be true to themselves. Such an unequal friendship makes for a rather special relationship.

Help

Parents, not schools, must teach their children to read

"READING," Francis Bacon declared, "maketh a full man." Fullness is evidently the Government's worry of the week. David Blunkett has announced a "National Reading Campaign". Every school in the country will receive £1,000 with which to galvanise the reading habit among our young.

This is New Labour's favourite tactic — a cheap, well-aimed "stimulus", which (like a Tomahawk missile) targets its objective so pin-point precisely that improvement is, after impact, self-sustaining. Create a few super-nurses or super-teachers as "role models" or throw a few sexy books at school children and reform will follow as surely as day follows night. No need for all that expensive infrastructural investment.

The thinking behind Blunkett's campaign is well-intentioned, but confused as to what is understood by "literacy". It goes back to what is the most fundamental, but uninvestigated, split in our education system: the point where it all starts. Where the home meets kindergarten, that is. Most readers of this and other quality newspapers will have been taught to read by their mothers (or their fathers) before they went to school. Once enrolled in school, most of them will have been taught to write by paid teachers, building on the parental literacy foundation.

Students of the history of the novel are familiar with that peculiar phenomenon in the 18th and 19th centuries — the illiterate female reader. There were large audiences of women for writers like Richardson or Jane Austen who could read fluently, but hardly write at all. Writing was reserved for the male sex as an occupational skill. There were, one is told, women who could read Shakespeare but who would sign the

marriage register with a cross. They had been taught to read by their mothers — it was passed down as a household skill like darning or dumpling making. No need for girls to learn penmanship. "Clerks" and "scriveners" (like scribes before them) were exclusively male trades.

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The thinking behind Bl

Help the madman of Europe

YOU DON'T need to make a phone call to the Foreign Office, the Quai D'Orsay or the State Department to know exactly what their Albania watchers have been thinking this week: "Here we go again." In their more polite moments they may talk about the sick man of Europe, but you know what they are really thinking – that Albania is in fact the madman of Europe.

A real madman can be locked up though. Lurching from one violent crisis to the next, Albania cannot be locked up – or ignored. Whatever happens, the rest of Europe has no choice: it has to persist in helping this wounded country – even if means doing so for a generation. If Albania is isolated and forgotten, we will all feel the consequences.

It is hard to know where to start in trying to explain the roots of the political culture that have led Albania into disaster. The tragedy is that ever since its liberation from the Turks in 1912, Albania has continued to live by politics of the past. As one Albanian put it to me: "Either you're in power – or in jail." And it is this relentless and destructive tradition that Albania has not yet had the chance to break.

Following the corrupt despotism of the Ottomans came the inter-war dictatorship of King Zog, then the Italian fascist occupation, followed by the Nazis followed in short order by Titoism and Stalinism with a short break for a spot of Maoism. Still groggy, then, it is hardly surprising that Albanians have had problems finding their balance in modern Europe.

At first after the fall of communism in 1991, it was easy to explain away the madness that then gripped the country. It was anger against the Communists which led to an orgy of destruction, to the burning down of factories and the wholesale pillage of anything state-owned.

And then it seemed as if things were going to be all right. Sali Berisha, a sophisticated former cardiologist, came to power in 1992 and began to set things to rights. He had the full support of the west and money began to pour into the country from the hundreds of thousands who had fled to Greece, Italy and elsewhere looking for jobs and money.

Although Albania was starting from a very low base, its economy began to grow. Foreigners, especially Greeks and Italians, were interested in investing and no one paid much attention when a man called Fatos Nano, the leader of the Socialist Party – the ex-Communists – was stung in jail, allegedly for pilfering Italian aid.

For a glorious moment then it looked as though Albania was going to make it. It has some of the most unspoiled coastline in the whole of Europe, and though small, the signs were encouraging. For example, it was common to meet men who had worked in Greece, saved up some money, bought some machinery and come home to set up some sort of workshop or another.

But something insidious was happening. Pyramid investment schemes began to operate. This was perhaps to be expected because they were simultaneously springing up in Russia, Romania, Serbia and elsewhere. The difference was that Albanians, dazzled by the phenomenal rates of interest they were paying out, invested almost all their savings in them. When, at the beginning of last year, the schemes came tumbling down, the rest of Europe thought the Albanians were idiots. How could they have been so gullible?

The answers they gave were instructive. "We're not as stupid as you think," explained



TIM JUDAH

Lurching from one violent crisis to the next, Albania cannot be ignored. Europe must aid this wounded nation

one man. "We thought our money must be safe since these pyramids were laundering criminal money and paying the government and socialists at the same time. Obviously we thought they would have a vested interest in keeping them going."

Last March the country was up in arms, it rose in a general uprising against Berisha, Berisha tried to cling to power but eventually resigned last August after his Democratic Party was crushed in the general elections. The rest of Europe seemed happy. Fatos Nano, out of jail now, was Prime Minister and so Albania could begin rebuilding – again.

What the rest of Europe had not counted on was the politics of revenge. Nano had been in jail for four years and Berisha was an angry man. Ministries were purged of Berisha supporters and in came Nano's men. It was Albanian bugger's turn – and with increasing frustration, people began to realise that the new lot were as corrupt as the old. Political tension rose and fell. In September Azem Hajdar, one of Berisha's closest allies, was shot and wounded in parliament by a Socialist deputy.

While most of the country returned to some form of normality though, the new government, made up mostly of southerners, never managed to reassert its control over large areas of the north, including Tropoja, the region from where Berisha comes from. The beginning of the conflict in Kosovo now meant that he also had another stick with which to beat the Socialists.

Tensions began to mount once more and, at the same time, security situation began to deteriorate again. Trucks on the main road south began to be held up by gangsters from a village known as a Democratic Party stronghold. Gangsters, politicians and men from the Kosova Liberation Army began squabbling over the lucrative arms trade to the north. Then, at the end of last month, out of the blue, the government arrested six former Berisha ministers and government officials charging them with crimes against humanity.

Berisha leapt at his chance, claiming that democracy was under threat and that it should be defended even "by force". When, last Sunday, Azem Hajdar was assassinated in front of the Democratic Party headquarters, his supporters claimed that the government had killed him. In fact, since he was alleged to have been a kingpin gun runner, he may have fallen foul of a something far less sinister. Berisha supporters began a violent rampage through Tirana, forcing Nano to flee his office at gunpoint.

Now Nano wants Berisha in jail – to pay back Berisha in kind. But, if violence cannot be curbed, then the Balkans and indeed the rest of Europe is facing a minor cata-



Armed Democratic Party protesters on the streets of Tirana in this week's attempted coup

Hector Pustizzi/AP

strophe. A lawless Albania is one in which mafia gangs with tentacles that reach to Milan, Stuttgart and even London can flourish. It is also one that sends out hundreds of thousands of impoverished people in search of work – or crime – anything with which to raise enough cash to live with.

Over

the last four years, some 30,000 Albanians have asked for political asylum in Britain alone and every single one has claimed to be from Kosovo. In fact two thirds of them are from Albania. Italy has a major problem with the Albanian mafia – and so does the Italian mafia, who have found the Albanians muscling in on their home turf.

In Germany, too, impoverished Albanians have become a major headache for the police and the drugs squads.

Albania is trapped in a vicious circle. Be-

cause it is run by politicians who believe that compromise is humiliation, who believe in revenge and in making as much money as possible before being overthrown, no one wants to invest there. In this climate, Albanian businessmen, plagued by protection rackets, cannot rebuild their country either and so no jobs can be created.

What Albania needs is a completely new set of politicians. Since we cannot create them ourselves the only thing to do is to persist. Scholarships, aid training and any other useful forms of help have to continue because it is in our interests to help as much as it is in theirs. We should support the calls of Germany and Italy who are recommending an international police force for the country and increased EU aid.

An unstable Albania threatens the rest of the region. For example, the uprising in Kosovo was only possible after last year's uprising released a million Kalashnikovs from the armouries for anyone to loot, or in the case of Kosovars, to buy.

Macedonia, with its large Albanian minority, remains a fragile state and if unrest spreads from Kosovo and Albania, the long-predicted "doomsday scenario" of war across the southern Balkans could easily follow.

So, we must persist. Like the vast majority of decent Albanians, we must wait until they find their new leaders. Gloomily Julia Goga-Cooke, the editor of the BBC Albanian Service, says: "I don't think that will happen in my lifetime." But we have no other choice.

RIGHT OF REPLY

RUTH LEA



The head of policy at the Institute of Directors answers Ken Livingstone's attack on 'fat cats'

I READ Ken Livingstone's recent comments on directors' pay and the need for the Institute of Directors to "get their heads out of the pig trough long enough to take a look at the real world" with weary resignation.

May I explain our position? Directors' remuneration is broadly determined by market forces, as is the pay of trade union leaders, footballers, pop stars, TV presenters and so on. Moreover, for top-performing British directors, the market is international. We live in a global, market economy. This is the real world!

Now we accept that the remuneration of large company (FTSE100) directors has increased more rapidly than for their employees in recent years. And, indeed, it has increased at a faster rate than for the vast majority of directors.

Last year we conducted an IoD members' survey which showed that in 1997 the average increase in remuneration (comprising salary, bonuses and all "perks") was in the range of three to four per cent – much in line with the national average. The survey showed that the directors of many small and medium-sized companies were relatively modestly paid. Average remuneration for a director of a company with turnover of less than £25m was £64,000 (less than John Monks', I understand), and the equivalent figure for a director of a company with turnover of between £25m and £200m was £105,000.

Given directors' huge responsibilities, the risks they take and the hours they commit to their firms, these figures are modest. And let us not forget the huge contribution businesses and women make to our country. Business provides jobs and creates wealth and pays for welfare and the NHS. And pays the salary of the MP for Brent East!

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BIGGEST
DECORATION
ISSUE
EVER

ON SALE 17 SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY POEM

FROG
BY STANLEY MOSS

I hold this living coldness,
this gland with eyes, mouth, feet,
shattered mirror of all creatures,
pulsing smile of fish, serpent, and man,
feet and fingers come out of a head
that is also a tail,
just as I caught him most of my life ago
in the sawdust of the icehouse.
I could not believe in him if he were not here.
He rests my spirit
and is beautiful as waterlilies.
The sound of his call is too large for his body:
"irrelevant, irrelevant, irrelevant."
Once in the dry countries he was a god.

From Stanley Moss's *Asleep in the Garden: new and selected poems* (Anvil, £9.95). Anvil Press celebrates its 30th birthday this autumn.
Our poems this week come from its latest titles.

ture produced by Lionel Poilane at 8 rue du Chêne-Midi, Paris, the "most famous bakery in the world". Similarly, Steingarten spares no effort to reproduce the "most honoured mashed potatoes in the world", whipped up by Joel Robuchon (Omar Sharif always has two helpings), though he finds Robuchon's addition of half a pound of butter to every pound of la vache potatoes to be a trifle excessive.

Winkingly, Steingarten admits his mistakes. His attempt to cook the legendary Japanese beef known as Wagyu

results in steak that is "fibrous, mealy and nearly inedible" following a meal of Wagyu in Osaka costing \$340 a head, his second effort is "wonderful".

And his quest for the ideal chip comes unstuck when "the horse fat begins to go rancid and dark".

Along with such Herculean endeavours, Steingarten mixes in a generous measure of good sense. Pondering the widespread fear of raw shellfish, he notes that "the chance of suffering a substantial injury in one day of sifting is 10 times worse than the chance of getting sick from eating a plate of cold, plump, tringy, succulent raw oysters".

Every health freak should be forced to read the chapter ominously entitled "Salad the Silent Killer", which gleefully informs readers that undercooked broad beans contain cyanide and fava beans can cause nausea, fatigue and, in extreme cases, jaundice. The sale of chickpeas is illegal in many Indian states due to the risk of lathyrism (lesions of the spinal cord which cause paralysis of the legs),

while immature green potatoes can actually kill.

Steingarten is particularly revealing on the topic of salt. He notes that though the Yanomamo Indians of northern Brazil, who eat a virtually salt-free diet, have "amazingly low blood pressure", the lack of sodium in their diet means that any injury may be disastrous (a particular drawback, since one-third of Yanomamo deaths result from violence). In any case, dropping salt would make no difference to most of us. For 92 per cent of the world's population, there is "no significant link" between salt and blood pressure.

Warning to his theme, Steingarten thunders, "Why public health officials want the entire population to act as if we were allergic to salt is beyond me... They never bother to calculate the profound benefits that scrumptious food can bring to our otherwise desperate lives. In 1,000-plus pages of federal nutritional reports I was unable to locate any instance of the words 'delicious', 'delectable', 'savoury' or 'yummy'."

Steingarten approaches dieting with the same thoroughness that he tackles indulgence. After a resentful moonie as a vegan, he finds that his cholesterol is "slightly higher than when

I started". With some difficulty, he persuades Proctor & Gamble to let him cook with Olestera, the miracle fat which passes unchanged through the body. Although the notorious problem of "anal seepage" has been overcome, he finds that Olestra-fried delicacies are "repulsively greasy". Steingarten's sharpest barbs are reserved for the best-selling faddists who propound no-fat diets.

This nutritional good sense is balanced by saliva-inducing forays into rural Italy and Kyoto. In his final chapter, he tackles that most daunting of all culinary challenges, the turkey. If you're condemned to having this gruesome bird, you may want to try out a "Thompson's Turkey" in three months time. Described as being "something of a cult", it involves baking the fowl in a flour-and-egg crust. Though the meat is "the most flavoursome and moist you will ever taste", Steingarten resents the loss of the turkey skin. Except for his bizarre prejudices concerning British taste and cuisine ("The British go to Greece just for the food, which says volumes to me"), this book is a banquet of wit, cynicism and good sense.

CHRISTOPHER HIRST

Barrett Deems

"BARRETT," SAID Louis Armstrong, "you're the only guy in the world that makes coffee nervous." Barrett Deems, billed as "the fastest drummer in the world" during his five years with Armstrong's All Stars, was an abrasive man driven by a restless energy.

He had constant rows with the rest of the band, who used to hold meetings about him.

"I don't care," said Armstrong, "as long as he goes ding-a-ding-a-ding."

"What's wrong with you?" Armstrong's manager Joe Glaser asked the drummer.

"Nothing," answered Deems. "I feel fine."

Deems was given his first drum because he was a hyperactive child. He remained so for the 84 years of his life.

I met him when he came to Liverpool with Armstrong in 1958. I wrote in *Melody Makers*: "The coffee lounge of Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel is designed to strike awe into all but cabinet ministers and the most eminent U. In Barrett Deems they hit a dead end." At that stage Deems had taken a dislike to all Europeans and wasn't afraid to say so. Asked what he thought of Europe he said, "They should clean it up, paint it and sell it."

He was a small, wiry little man whose most notable feature was his huge Adam's apple and he never stopped moving. "I play drums the way I used to box." I ducked as he demonstrated with a quick jab and uppercut the table. A portly gentleman in evening dress rose from his chair nearby, folded his newspaper and left.

"The way we travel round the world, you got to stay healthy," Deems said. He admitted to smoking four packs of Camels a day. He offered me one and lit it with a cigarette lighter like a blowtorch. "That's a real lighter man. The best make in the world. You can't knock it out; you can't blow it out. Look." He blew. The lighter went out.

Deems travelled the world with Armstrong on tours sponsored by the US State Department and documented in the film *Satchmo the Great* (1956). At a concert in Ghana, Deems' drum feature "Mop Mop" so excited the 100,000 crowd that a riot broke out. That same year the band appeared in the film *High Society* with Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly. Amongst the more than 2,000 recordings he made during his career Deems played on two of Armstrong's most famous albums - *Satch Plays Fats* (1955) and *Satch Plays W.C. Handy* (1956).

Deems said of Armstrong:

He was the most beautiful man I ever worked for and the best entertainer in the world. He was constantly giving me tips and saying, "Sonny, if someone on the street asked him for 25 cents, he'd give them a \$100 bill and tell them to buy some food and clothes and find a place to stay. A lot of people would ask him about me. 'Why do you have a white drummer?' He'd just say 'Because I like his playing.' Period.

I remember once we were in Biloxi, Mississippi, and we couldn't find a hotel that would let us in. So here's Louis, who always had about \$10,000 cash in his pocket, and the guy can't get a hotel room. The whole band had to sleep in a gymnasium that night. Go figure it out.

It is hard to think of anyone else who worked for so many eminent bandleaders. When Deems began to play he couldn't be bothered to learn to read music and never did. "Who cares?" he said. "Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa couldn't read too well either, but they could play. Guess what? That's what counts."

Deems was in Chicago at the Twenties roared and the city was transformed into the crucible of jazz by Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver and other of the music's innovators. "Every block had four clubs," he said. "You only made \$14 a week playing from nine at night until four in the morning. But you could hear everyone - Krupa, Dave Tough, Baby Dodds, all the great drummers." Deems led his own



"Why do you have a white drummer?" Louis Armstrong was often asked. He would just say, "Because I like his playing" Redferns

stage personality was well captured in the 1951 film *Rhythm Inn*, a story about a young songwriter and a budding girl vocalist in which Deems was given a feature number. His first visit to Europe followed shortly afterwards under the leadership of Charlie Barnet. On his return he made a significant move by leaving the big-band field to work in the Dixieland group led by the cornetist Deems' trumpet, Bobby Lewis. "We put Deems' drums in the car and Barrett in the boot."

Deems settled finally in Chicago

stage travelling, and died in his fifties as a result. "Never cared for the stuff," commented Deems, who abstained for most of his life.

As the Armstrong sidemen had learned, the Teagarden men found that travelling as a sextet with Deems on board had its problems.

"He was no trouble," said the band's

drummer, Bobby Lewis. "We put

Deems' drums in the car and

Barrett in the boot."

Deems

At that stage Deems had taken a dislike to all Europeans and wasn't afraid to say so. Asked what he thought of Europe he said, 'They should clean it up, paint it and sell it'

hands in Chicago before coming to the notice of the jazz violinist Joe Venuti, a man with a similarly abrasive character. Deems joined Venuti's band in 1937 and stayed until 1944 when petrol shortage and the draft forced the violinist to disband.

Deems worked for Jimmy Dorsey, Tommy Dorsey and then Woody Herman before returning to his home town of Springfield. Then, in 1948, he joined Red Norvo. His eccentric

"Spanier paid lousy money, always had done, and when I left because of this he thought I didn't appreciate him. He was right."

The years with Armstrong followed and then in 1960 Deems came off the road to lead his own band at Brass Rail club in Chicago. After a few months he joined the band led by the trombonist Jack Teagarden, an easygoing virtuoso who drank to sustain himself against the con-

stant travelling, and died in his fifties as a result. "Never cared for the stuff," commented Deems, who abstained for most of his life.

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Deems settled finally in Chicago

American musicians billed as "The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong" in the early Eighties. Fast becoming a legend in Chicago, he recorded and worked there with a blues pianist who already had that status, Art Hodes, an expatriate Russian who had become a jazz great.

Still thin and sprightly into his eighties, Deems wore bottle-thick glasses, had hair that a hairdresser described as "18 cowlicks" and had grown a beard which failed to stop the Adam's apple protruding at will. He resembled, as one of the local papers put it, a rooster. In the early Nineties, he took advantage of his extraordinary appearance and volatile stage manner to form a big band. The audience loved his corrosive cracks, but these did not detract from the fact that his band, which played regularly at the Kidd Room in Chicago, was a very good one that attracted some of the city's best musicians. Amongst them was Deems' wife Jane Johnson, who played alto and flute in the band and was more than 30 years his junior. One of the band members said to him, "Don't you worry about the big age difference?" "No," said Deems. "If she dies, she dies."

Researching for a programme on Armstrong a few years ago, the

radio presenter Campbell Burnap and producer Terry Carter called at Deems' home. It reflected the drummer's personality. By now he collected drums and one bedroom was jammed to the ceiling with them. One of the largest was a bass drum that had been used in John Philip Sousa's original brass band. The six cats and three dogs that ran about the house were unimpressed.

Deems nearly died from a collapsed lung in 1983 but determinedly rose from his bed and continued to lead and play with the band each week until his death. His drumming was slightly less swift, but otherwise unimpaired.

"I got six, maybe seven hundred lighters back home. I collect them," he told me at the Adelphi. "This one's a present from Zildjian, who makes the cymbals." He lit the monster again. "Look, you can't blow it out!" This time he blew more gently. The huge flame flickered and then shot up again. Deems beamed delightedly. "See!"

STEVE VOCE

Barrett Deems, drummer and bandleader: born Springfield, Illinois 1 March 1914; twice married (one daughter); died Chicago 15 September 1998.

Dane Clark

FEW ACTORS were more effective at portraying belligerent, chip-on-their-shoulder characters than Dane Clark. Small in stature, but tough and wiry, he was frequently compared to John Garfield, one of the top stars at the same studio, Warners, but Clark, though popular with cinemagoers in the Forties, never achieved similar stardom. His pugnacious rebels created less empathy than Garfield's and sometimes (as in his overdrawn anarchic painter of *A Stolen Life*) upset a film's balance in their ferocity.

The actor's intensity was both his strength and his weakness. Though he graduated to leading roles at the studio, his best chance came when he was loaned to Republic to star in *Frank Borzage's Moonrise*, a moody piece in which Clark was ideally cast as a hot-tempered outsider whose father was hanged for murder.

Clark's last 1938 show was both his strength and his weakness. Though he graduated to leading roles at the studio, his best chance came when he was loaned to Republic to star in *Frank Borzage's Moonrise*, a moody piece in which Clark was ideally cast as a hot-tempered outsider whose father was hanged for murder.

Born Bernard Zavville in 1913 in Brooklyn, New York, he was a fine athlete and was given the opportunity to become a baseball player, but chose higher education instead. He received a BA from Cornell University and a law degree from St John's University, New York, but the Depression limited his opportunities and he worked as a labourer, boxer and model before turning to writing for radio.

This led to acting, and he made his Broadway debut (as Bernard Zavville) in Friedrich Wolf's *Salors of Catarro* (1934), produced by the leftist Theatre Union. George Tobias (later also a contract player at Warners) was in the cast and he and Clark were among those arrested when some of the company joined Communist pickets demonstrating against Orbach's department store. Though the matinee was cancelled, the actors were balled out in time for the evening performance.

Clark was next in *Panic* (1935), which ran for only three performances but was described by one critic as "the outstanding critical failure of the year". An anti-capitalist blank-verse tragedy that attempted to account for the national bank calamity of 1933 in terms of Greek drama, it is considered an important part of theatrical history for several reasons - it was the first play by the poet Archibald MacLeish, it

starred the 19-year-old Orson Welles, its producers included John Houseman and Virgil Thomson, and the Greek-style chorus was choreographed by Martha Graham.

Clark then joined the socially conscious Group Theatre and acted in a highly praised Clifford Odets double-bill, the anti-Nazi *Till the Day I Die* and the radical *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), in which the auditorium was assumed to be the meeting hall for a group of taxi drivers at a union meeting, with the audience the potential strikers and actors spotted throughout the house to increase the feeling of audience participation.

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Clark then settled into a run of girl-chasing "best buddy" roles, portraying the soldier friend of Dennis Morgan in *The Very Thought of You* (1944), Robert Hutton's soldier pal in *Hollywood Canteen* (1944), and a wounded soldier who befriends a blinded marine (Garfield) at a military hospital in *Pride of the Marines* (1945). His role in the all-star *Hollywood Canteen* is remembered for the moment when he says to the girl with whom he is dancing, "You know, you're a dead ringer for Joan Crawford." When she replies, "Don't look now, but I am Joan Crawford," Clark promptly faints.

He began to tire of such type-casting, though, and had the first of several battles with the studio head Jack Warner for better roles and more pay. "They were always giving me lines like 'You woman, you,'" he said later. "They had me as a teenage soldier back from the Pacific or some place. In *The Very Thought of You* I had to bark like a dog when I saw a girl. I ask you, how can you be subtle - how can you underplay when you're making sounds like a dog?"

After *A Stolen Life* (1946), in which as a consistently bad-tempered painter he won Bette Davis with the line, "Man eats woman and woman eats man; that's basic," he was given his first starring role in *Her Kind of Man* (1946), a half-hearted attempt by the studio to recapture the glory of their earlier gangster films, in which Clark, as a newspaper man, gets Janis Paige, a night-club singer, out of the clutches of the gangster Zachary Scott. *Whiplash* (1948) was similar, only this time Clark was a painter reduced to barking like a dog when he saw a girl. I ask you, how can you be subtle - how can you underplay when you're making sounds like a dog?"

Bit parts in movies followed, including *The Glass Key*, *Wake Island* and *Pride of the Yankees* (all 1942), and at Warners the Bogart war film *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943).

Warners then offered him a contract, and with the new name of Dane Clark he was given a featured role in *Destination Tokyo* (1948), the first of two films he made with Garfield (who was also a graduate of the Group Theatre). The story of a submarine crew on combat duty featured Clark as Tin Can, most aggressive of the crew members.

Clark then toured in several plays, including the Group Theatre's biggest success, *Odets' Golden Boy*, until being called to Hollywood in 1941 to act in promotional films being made by the US Army. Bit parts in movies followed, including *The Glass Key*, *Wake Island* and *Pride of the Yankees* (all 1942), and at Warners the Bogart war film *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943).

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Clark with Lita Milan on location for the 1955 film *The Toughest Man Alive*

Clark was then borrowed by Republic for *Moonrise* (1948). The story of a social outcast on the run after an accidental killing was treated with lyrical romanticism, and the offbeat teaming of the grim Clark and ethereal Gail Russell as his girlfriend gave the film extra plausibility. Clark finished his Warner contract with two minor films, *Barricade* (1950), in which he beat Raymond Massey, a sadistic mine-owner, to death, and a mystery story, *Backfire* (1950).

The following year Clark came to England to star with Margaret Lockwood in Roy Baker's comedy-thriller *Highly Dangerous*. In this fanciful tale of an entomologist (Lockwood) on a government spy assignment who is given a truth drug by the

enemy under which she imagines herself as her favourite Dick Barton-like radio character and saves the day with the aid of an American reporter (Clark), the actor revealed an unexpectedly droll sense of humour. In 1954 he co-produced and starred in the series *Police Story*. Clark returned to Broadway in the Sixties as replacement lead in *Tchin Tchin* and *A Thousand Clowns*. Late in that decade his wife of many years, Margot Yoder, died, and in 1972 he married a young stockbroker, Geraldine Frank.

A consistent performer on radio throughout his career, Clark was also a television pioneer, appearing in a Cheviot Tele-Theatre episode in 1949. He went on to appear in dozens of television shows and starred in two series, *Wire Service* (1956-57) as a reporter, and *Sold Venture* (1957), which he described at the time as "about an adventure-hunt skipper of a small Caribbean boat-for-hire, *Go Man Go*.

Television movies in which he appeared included *Say Goodbye, Maggie Cole* (1975), the last film made by Susan Hayward, and from 1974 until 1978 he had a regular role on the series *Police Story*. Clark returned to Broadway in the Sixties as replacement lead in *Tchin Tchin* and *A Thousand Clowns*. Late in that decade his wife of many years, Margot Yoder, died, and in 1972 he married a young stockbroker, Geraldine Frank.

TOM VALLANCE

Bernard Zavville (Dane Clark), actor: born New York 18 February 1913; married first Margot Yoder (deceased), second 1972 Geraldine Frank; died Santa Monica, California 11 September 1998.

Sir Arthur Vick

IN 1964 Arthur Vick became President and Vice-Chancellor of the Queen's University of Belfast. During the following ten years he demonstrated his consummate administrative skills, guiding the university during a period of terrorism and political unrest which started in 1968.

Queen's University had been one

of the three non-sectarian universi-

ties of the University of Ireland formed

in 1908, and it remained non-

sectarian, welcoming students from

across the religious divide. It says

much for Vick's quiet and unassuming administration that the university

remained an oasis of peace and sanity, where students from across

the divide met and studied, debated

and socialised together. Many formed

lasting relationships, which in the long

term has greatly helped the return

of peace and sanity to the province.

As the Troubles developed,

Belfast became a virtual cultural

wilderness, until with the strong sup-

Sir Arthur Vick



Littlewood, left, with John Bradbury (viola), Basil Howitt (cello) and Keith Jones (piano) at Chetham's, 1957

Gerald Littlewood

ANY FINAL assessment of how Humphrey Chetham's Bluecoat foundation of 1653 grew by 1969 to be Britain's foremost specialist school of music, Chetham's, will surely acknowledge Gerald Littlewood's role as having been seminal. His appointment as resident arts and crafts master in 1949, fresh from Loughborough Training College, will be seen as a decisive step in a remarkable evolution.

His arrival in Manchester happily coincided with the headmastership of the dedicated and visionary Harry Vickers. Through the Fifties and Sixties they managed an impressive succession of educational advances in which musicality was featured strongly. Not least of these was the grant-aid agreement with the neighbouring Manchester Cathedral, which introduced able choristers to Chetham's and involved the creative collaboration of the cathedral's organist Norman Cocker.

Littlewood immediately found ways of harnessing the budding expertise of these able youngsters in his mission to create a musical culture in which all

could participate and from which a fine orchestra and choir would emerge. Throughout this period a packed Free Trade Hall would resound each October to the music of more than a hundred Littlewood-trained children, many of whose instruments Littlewood had either made or repaired and who played music a good deal of which Norman Cocker had been encouraged either to compose or arrange.

It is difficult to believe the kind of schoolmastering of those early days. As one of only three resident masters Littlewood would call school revellers at 6.15am, have an orchestra practice under way by seven and, between breakfast and school, rehearse a choir of 30. Typically, his daily teaching programme included, in addition to his specialist art and crafts and his adopted music, English, Religious Instruction and PE. He also provided pastoral guidance, found time for chamber music, stage- and puppet-construction and wine-making. He might then spend the evening taking pupils on a lecture recital in aid of school instruments.

His instrument-making began in earnest when, in the mid-Sixties, he found a wealth of discarded seasoned sycamore in the ancient school laundry. Several Tertis model violas emerged which still speak with a strong, warm orchestral voice. His later instruments, made in a zestful experimental period after his retirement from Chetham's, were less likely to raise an eyebrow amongst chamber music players.

During his happy retirement with his wife Audrey and daughter Annie in North Wales, he threw himself into the life of the church and community, carving elegant choir stalls, encouraging young people in church music, teaching string-playing with freshness and enthusiasm in a local school, singing light opera and performing salon music on the local pier pavilion. During the last two years, however, cancer took its toll.

Littlewood's generosity to all whom he befriended is legendary. He forgot none of the boys, and later girls, who came under his influence at Chetham's, would recount their memorable es-

capades and follow their progress with interest. A Lancashire Grammar School lad from Audenshaw, son of a policeman, he was at home with ordinary folk, loving the homely verse of the Lancashire dialect poet Edwin Waugh. He was less at home amongst professional musicians and gave pretentiousness short shrift.

Gerald Littlewood made things happen in the days before inspired amateurism became unfashionable, subsequently unacceptable. The heart of his significant contribution to Chetham's was to envisage, foster and sustain the ideal of a family community where music mattered and from which excellence could grow. Without his electric genius, Chetham's School of Music could not have gone on to develop its very special excellence.

KETHE JONES

Gerald Littlewood, music teacher, born Audenshaw, Lancashire 7 September 1927; married (one daughter, one stepson); died Old Colwyn, Clwyd 1 September 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

WALKER, A.S. (Johnny), aged 82, died peacefully at home 13 September. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium 1pm Wednesday 23 September and afterwards at 3 Sandstone Hill, Kent Road, TW9 3JJ. Donations to the Royal British Legion or to Prince Alice Hospital, c/o The Leek Centre, Kingston Road, Galsworthy Road, Kingston KT2 7QB.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Edward, Patron, Ocean Youth Club, attends the Southampton Boat Show. The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, Royal Anthropological Institute, opens the Sixth International Festival of Ethnographic Film, Goldsmiths' College, London SE14.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services. Wedding anniversaries. In memoriam) are charged at £8.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

GAZETTE

BIRTHDAYS

Professor Sir Donald Acheson, former Chief Medical Officer, Departments of Health and of Social Security, 72; Miss Anne Bancroft, actress, 67; The Right Rev Timothy Bevington, former Bishop of Portsmouth, 63; Mr David Bintley, choreographer, 41; Professor Alec Broers, Vice-President, Cambridge University, 60; Mr Russell Brown MP, 47; Marshal of the RAF Lord Craig of Radley, 69; Mr Donald Cruickshank, Director-General, Ofqual, 56; General Sir Kenneth Darling, former Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, Northern Europe, 82; Miss Jennifer Dickson, artist and photographer, 62; Mr Bernard Everett, ambassador to Mozambique, 55; Sir Desmond Fennell, former High Court judge, 66; Mr Gwyn Francis, former Director-General, Forestry Commission, 68; Sir Richard Gaskell, former President, Law Society, 82; Professor Sir John Hale, historian, 75; Miss Angela Heylin, chairman, Charles Barker, 55; Mr Damon Hill, racing driver, 38; Mr Michael Jack MP, 52; Miss Tessa Jowell MP, Minister for Public Health, 51; Mr Desmond Lyman, journalist and broadcaster, 56; Mr Roddy McDowell, actor, 70; Mr Reginald Marsh, actor, 72; Mr Brian Matthew, radio presenter, 70; Mr Stirling Moss, racing driver, 70; Sir Paul Newall, former Lord Mayor of London, 64; Mr Andrew Reed MP, 34; Miss Dimah Sheridan, actress, 76; Mr Colin Short, chairman, United Biscuits, 64; Miss Mary Stewart (Lady Stewart), historical

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Pope Paul V, 1552; Francisco Gomez de Quevedo y Villegas, poet and satirist, 1580; Samuel Frount, water-colour painter, 1783; Edward William Lane, translator of *The Thousand and One Nights*, 1801; William Carlos Williams, poet, 1883; Charles Tomlinson Griffes, composer, 1884; Sir Francis Charles Chichester, yachtsman and aviator, 1901; Sir Frederick Ashton, choreographer, 1906; Dolores Costello, actress, 1906.

Deaths: Tobias George Smollett, novelist, 1771; Alfred Victor, Comte de Vigny, poet, 1863; Walter Savage Landor, writer, 1864; William Henry Fox Talbot, photographic pioneer, 1877; Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Gothic architect, 1879; Ethel Mary Dell (Mrs G.T. Savage), romantic novelist, 1938; Ruth Benedict, anthropologist, 1948; Dame Lilian Braithwaite, actress, 1948; Friedrich Adolf Paneth, chemist, 1958; Katherine Anne Porter, novelist, 1960; Professor Sir Karl Raimund Popper, philosopher, 1994.

On this day: Edinburgh was occupied by the Jacobites under the Young Pretender, 1745; the Constitution of the United States of America

LECTURES

National Gallery: Jonathan Miller, 'Reflections (ii): a discussion of the exhibition', 1pm.
British Museum: Kim Sloan, 'R.W. Lloyd's Turner Water-

Colours: in pursuit of perfection', 11.30am.
Victoria and Albert Museum: Philippa Barton, 'Baroque and Rococo Ornament', 2pm.
National Portrait Gallery: Brian Louis Pearce, 'Algerian Charles Swinburne', 11.30pm.
Wallace Collection: Peter Hughes, 'French 18th-Century Filing Cabinets', 1pm.

LADY CAIRNCROSS

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mary Frances Cairncross will be held in the Chapel of St Peter's College, Oxford, on Saturday 26 September 1998 at 3pm, followed by tea in the Hall.

DINNERS

British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing The Annual Dinner of the 37th British Conference of Non-Destructive Testing was held yesterday evening at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Mr M.R. Dawson, President of the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing, presided. Mr B. Larsen, President of the Danish Society for Non-Destructive Testing, was the speaker. The following prizes and awards were presented:

(A) Ray Sharpe Prize: Dr C.B. Scruby (AEA Technology); John Grimshaw (Metek); Robert Banks, Roger Farlow and Professor Gordon Hayward (Strathclyde University); Ross Halmshaw Award: Tony Woodbridge, Bob Chapman and Garry Gossage (Nucleonics Division); Ian Morris and Garry Gossage (TWI). T.H. Cole Award: British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing, West of England Branch. Tony Lager Award: British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing, London & Home Counties Branch.

HOW LONG does it take for a word to receive official recognition? For some time, those hired on a short-term contract to augment full-time workers in an office have been in the habit of referring to these manacled and invariably lower-paid colleagues as "permies".

It is in particular usage

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER
HAWTREE
permie, n.

among those called in at increasingly high rates to avert disasters with computer systems come the year 2000.

As such, it now figures in an entertaining first novel, *Stickieback*, by John McCabe, whose plot goes wonky towards the end. His ears are closer to the ground than that of the compilers of that recent, avowedly vulgar new Oxford dictionary. Will its rivals rush to fill this gap?

MYTHOLOGICAL NOTES

ALAN F. ALFORD

Henny-Penny discovers Atlantis



Why did Atlas fail to withstand the sky?

IN THE English fairy tale, Henny-Penny was hit on the head by a falling object, and then set off with Cocky-Locky, Ducky-Daddles, and the rest of the tongue-twisting farmyard crew, to warn the king that "the sky's a-going to fall". What was the reason for this paranoid behaviour? Surprisingly, the answer can be found in the famous legend of the lost island of

Atlantis.

When the Greek philosopher Plato described Atlantis as an "island" which was struck by an earthquake and sank into the sea, he inspired countless generations of explorers to search the deepest oceans and furthest corners of the Earth for the remnants of a lost civilisation. However, these expeditions were wild-goose chases, because the Egyptians - firmly believed

that the lost island was up in the sky.

It was a central tenet of ancient Egyptian religion that the sky had fallen to Earth on more than one occasion. The oldest of these fallen sky-deities was Geb, who was said to have laid a Great Egg out of which emerged the phoenix with a blinding flash of light. Geb then let out a piercing scream and fell to the Earth's surface, carrying out "construction work" in "millions of places".

Another fallen god was Osiris, who was born in the sky but was then "laid low" by the evil god Seth. Osiris was said to have "split open" the Earth, and come to rest in the deep dark caverns of the underworld.

The Egyptians believed that the gods had descended to the Earth from a place in the sky, known variously as the "Homeland of the Primeval Ones", the "eastern Horizon of Heaven" or the "Mountain-Land of the God". But underlying all of these epithets was the image of an island floating in an infinite abyss of primeval waters, or Space.

How did this island come to be lost? The Egyptians claimed that Osiris had drowned (compare the sinking of Atlantis), but they also said that Osiris had been "dismembered", i.e. chopped into pieces - a close parallel to the "earthquake" which destroyed Atlantis.

The myth of the sky falling to Earth reflected an Egyptian belief in a catastrophic "act of creation", a day when the sky-goddess Nut gave birth to her

children of chaos" and the sky became "choked and stifled". The Earth was said to have become an "Island of Fire" as a result of impacts from heaven.

Was ancient Egyptian religion inspired by a meteorite which fell from the asteroid belt? The Egyptians believed that asteroids and meteorites were parts of the body of their sky-deity who had been

dismembered. Remarkably, this sky-deity

was described in the same terms as used for the Earth herself - an island, a mountain, a throne, and a horizon. In other words, the Egyptians believed that their "God" was a planet.

The same idea is found in depictions of the god Atlas supposedly the first king of Atlantis, who was shown supporting the heavens in the form of a planetary globe. The Greek meaning of his name tells us that Atlas failed to withstand the sky, which came crashing down to the Earth.

Atlantis was thus conceived as a planet which suffered a catastrophe and sank into the waters of space. But might there be a reality behind this myth? The notion that one or more planets have actually

exploded in our solar system is not without its supporters in the science of astronomy.

If their predictions concerning the explosive origins of asteroids and comets are proved correct, the ancient Egyptian myths will become due for re-assessment. And Henny-Penny won't be the only one to wake up with a sore head.

Alan F. Alford is the author of "The Phoenix Solution: secrets of a lost civilisation" (Hodder & Stoughton, £18.99)

On a walkabout with Mrs Thatcher

THE INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE

17 SEPTEMBER 1987

The Prime Minister was captured yesterday in an arresting image - back to camera on a wasteland in Middlesbrough. Peter Jenkins reports

HOPES THAT Mrs Thatcher might go walkabout in the lower depths of the other Britain were quickly dashed. Her visits to the deprived urban areas of the country have been planned as sunrise tours. Everything she saw was new and nascent, green-site or high-tech. If by inner city you mean Teesside or Brixton, this was like a sunrise in the country.

Teesside is a straggling conurbation of small cities or towns loosely tied together by motorways. Rain or smog might have been more appropriate but, in defiance of the weather forecasters, the sun shone brightly all day long and the ICI chemical works was on its best behaviour, emitting picturesque white smoke into a blue sky.

We began at a derelict and deserted 75-acre site, trapped in the bed of the River Tees where a foundry had once stood, employing in its heyday 1,000 men. Some 50,000 jobs have gone from Teesside in the Thatcher years and the local unemployment rate in Middlesbrough is 28 per cent. The Prime Minister alighted from her Daimler and slipped into sensible shoes in which to pick her way through the rubble.

She was told how the newly formed Teesside Development Corporation planned to divert the waters of the Tees, link the site by bridge to Stockton and build some 500 houses around a marine development. In two years she would see the place

rebuilt. There was no other way.

Harold Macmillan, who in the Thirties had sat for Stockton just across the river, had believed there was a "middle way". But not this Prime Minister. Where was the money, reporters wanted to know. "You keep asking me facile questions," she complained.

Next stop was the Cadcam centre, a high-tech industrial estate. Cadcam stands for Computer-Aided Design, Computer-Aided Management. Here she preached her gospel of co-operation - between government, local authority and private enterprise.

The Prime Minister posed for pictures in the middle of this large empty space, presiding - they might suggest - over a scene of desolation of her own making.

Smart Bell, the Middlesbrough MP, had shown up, not to protest but to welcome her

coming. But she was wrong, if she thought she couldn't work with Labour councils. "Our councils are moderate, traditional Labour councils," he said. They were sensible people yet they were rate-capped and had no money to repair the deteriorating housing stock.

Listening to Mrs Thatcher extol the virtues of enterprise was one of its northern exemplars. This was John Hall, the Northumberland miner's son who built the great Metrocentre in Gateshead, the largest supermarket complex in Europe. Now he has bought Lord Londonderry's seat, Winyard Hall, and the 5,000 acres that go with it. Here, in the cause of provincial regeneration, he plans to create what he calls a "centre of excellence". A business park will be provided with three golf courses, a five-star hotel, pheasant and partridge shooting facilities. Then he'll sell off two-acre plots to businessmen to live like country gentlemen.

"It's the life style they want," he said. "We're not peasants up here. You'll have to change your bloody image of us."

Round the corner some real people had congregated to greet the Prime Minister; the first she had encountered all day. Some cheered, some booed. A man with a megaphone called out: "Why has she rate-capped the council? Why won't she give us some money to build homes like the ones we have just seen? They are the answers we want from her."

Mrs Thatcher did not stop to tell him to please stop asking facile questions. She said nothing.

From "The Independent", Thursday 17 September 1987

Something funny's going on

Where is the new generation of female stand-up comics? Probably backstage – and not telling the jokes, but organising them. They are now surviving, even thriving, in the macho business of comedy by becoming men's managers. By Veronica Lee

It was a Perrier Comedy Award judge last month and sat through dozens of acts from the inspired to the dire. Depressingly, there wasn't a single female up for serious consideration in either the main G Awards, or even among the new oldtimers. Where are the Jo Brand, the Jenny Eclair and the Caroline Aherne of the current stand-up generation, who lift the lid on the female psyche or offer an alternative run male comics talking about themselves? But perhaps I was looking in the wrong place for comedic talent. Remarkably, of the 10 acts on the two shortlists, eight are managed by women. While women may be taking a rest from performing, there is no shortage of them behind the scenes.

Not long ago, one would have expected the shortlists to be dominated by acts managed by Avalon or Stone Ranger, two high-profile, highly visible comedy management/promotion companies run by go-getting young 'men'. But this year the distaff side appears to have taken over.

Co-Dawn Sedgwick is manager of perrier winner Tommy Tiernan, defaced Byrne and Ardal O'Hanlon, rather background in television, a former describes her as "a safe pair of hands", which is perhaps reflecting in her slightly motherly manner. She says: "It's a growing area for women and where they are taken seriously. The entertainment industry is still male-dominated, but there is now a generation who have moved on to a higher level and I hope it will have a knock-on effect in performing."

But why has a generation of women comics been lost? "Sadly,"

Blaire says, "lot of women feel that they have to do bog-standard 'women's' material, which often doesn't work, unfairly or unfairly. If a woman does best about sanitary products people often turn off, but a man talking about sex or football is fine. It's hard

from a performer's point of view in that she has to come up with something very different to make an impact because they are compared unfavourably with men. And stand-up is tough – you really have to show your mettle."

Vivienne Smith, the vivacious and forthright ex-publicity agent of the Gilded Balloon in Edinburgh and now manager of Perrier nominee Ed Byrne, Michael Smiley and IT Marcus Brigstocke, has a more prosaic explanation for the lack of young female talent. "Women are in much more sensible than men at an hourly age, so I guess they're learning to be lawyers and doctors rather



Top, Caroline Aherne, jobbing stand-up turned TV personality; above, 1995 Perrier winner Jenny Eclair; right, Vivienne Smith and Dawn Sedgwick – respectively agent and manager on the comedy circuit



Neville Elder/UPPA/SDR

than spending time in smoky clubs. But it's true that a lot of young guys like the rock'n'roll image of comedy today, and they certainly have more role models for getting up and performing." The 1995 Perrier winner Jenny Eclair believes that the world of stand-up, with its aggressively drink-sodden, heckling audiences, is so antithetical to women that she does not wonder that so few want to do it. "I always say that women have more sense," she says. "It's a vaguely masochistic thing to do."

But she wishes that women had more staying power, or worked harder to get it right. "There's a generation of women coming up to 30 who are missing or who have simply given up. I met one recently who had dropped out and I asked her why.

Vivienne Smith is not convinced by the assumed persona argument. "Well, there's Rhona Cameron and Donna McPhail for a start. But don't all performers have to adopt

She puts this down to differences in the male and female psyche. "Men start practising being funny early on – it's the way parents treat them. With girls, it's 'Doesn't she look pretty? Men don't communicate with each other with any depth – they try to make each other laugh instead. Women share secrets."

Eclair thinks the only way a woman can survive in such a tough business is by assuming a stage persona vastly different to her own. So different is the off-duty Eclair from the offstage one that she has never allowed her partner, father of their young daughter, to see her live act. Eclair says the relationship would be over if he saw her vulgar, foul-mouthed, horny creation in full flow.

Vivienne Smith is not convinced by the assumed persona argument. "Well, there's Rhona Cameron and Donna McPhail for a start. But don't all performers have to adopt

a stage persona? Otherwise, it's just Joe Bloggs making an after-dinner speech at the Rotary club."

But it is true that more female stand-ups than men do "acts" rather than "turns" as themselves. Caroline Aherne and Brenda Gilhooley were jobbing stand-ups till they became, respectively, Mrs Merton and Gayle Tuesday, and both shot to television fame overnight.

Smith concedes that comedy is largely a macho world: "As much as any middle-class sport can be considered macho," she says dryly. "It is a male-dominated and competitive business but that's not confined to comedy. I don't know to whose benefit that kind of approach is. I believe you are only as good as your clients, and you should try to do your work with a certain amount of decorum and discretion."

Women in management can also offer a broader view. As Dawn Sedgwick says, "Most of our comedians are male and we can offer a female perspective on their material."

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Women in comedy management tend to work with smaller teams. For Vivienne Smith this is a deliberate policy formed from previous experience. "When I worked in a large management company the focus wasn't there. It was a numbers game – how much money has that client done this week? Not much, so move them aside and concentrate on this one who's doing really well

at the moment." Dawn Sedgwick, too, believes comedy management should be client-centred. "We have a strong, small clientele because we take the long view of their careers and work them hard across the board, to encourage them as writers and TV performers in addition to doing stand-up. I think the larger companies are perhaps more interested in getting their own name forward rather than their artists'. We don't have that ego working."

From a purely financial point of view, too, a quiet but effective management beavering quietly away on comics' behalf pays other rewards. As one experienced Edinburgh observer put it: "You couldn't move up there without seeing an Avalon or Stone Ranger logo, bag or poster. You can bet every penny of that comes out of the artists' fees."

But while we can applaud the work female managements are

doing for male comics, all is not lost on the women comics front. Channel 4, organisers of newcomers' award So You Think You've Funny?, were delighted by the strong showing of young women stand-ups in this year's competition and expect those such as Caroline Quinn, Nadine Leonard and Sheba Moserrat to reach the mainstream within a couple of years.

Eclair thinks a challenge lies ahead. "There is a modern wave of comedy that is surreal, whereas women tend to be emotional gutters and that sort of thing is now considered old hat, too Eighties. It's going to be interesting to see if the new generation of young female comics are going to get away from their genitalia and their age and their looks and compete with the boys on that new front." In the meantime, though, look for the women backstage rather than on it.

THE WEST END HAS DARED TO BE DANGEROUS!

Photos by Tomi EVERETT-STOKE

Superlatives have risen to flood-level'

DIANA RIGG... THE MOST DARING AND MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE OF HER CAREER

John Peter / Rex Features

REPUBLICA'S SAFFRON has courted more than her fair share of controversy, though until recently it has been for little more than her lurid hairdo. Last year, she advised Janet Jackson to "Ave a word with yourself, love" after she appeared on stage with red streaks in her hair, while Lene from Scandinavian pop sensation Aqua was similarly cut down to size after sporting a blood-red barnet.

Red is the colour, bloodless the sound

REPUBLICA'S SAFFRON has courted more than her fair share of controversy, though until recently it has been for little more than her lurid hairdo. Last year, she advised Janet Jackson to "Ave a word with yourself, love" after she appeared on stage with red streaks in her hair, while Lene from Scandinavian pop sensation Aqua was similarly cut down to size after sporting a blood-red barnet.

To be fair, Republica have certainly made it musically in the US, providing a riotous soundtrack to frat-house par-

ties and even getting played on *Bagnolet* from time-to-time. But they have found it harder to sustain a successful pop presence on these shores. The London trio first appeared late in 1996, their rousing anthem, "Ready To Go", having a degree of success, but were soon eclipsed by the success of their smarter counterparts, Garbage. Other jarringly similar singles have come and gone, but to no great effect.

It is Saffron's cockney brass, more than anything else, that has sustained her flourishing media persona,

having secured her a stream of soundbites in the style bibles and regular slots on pop discussion programmes. While the girls bill and coo over her luscious locks, the boys slaver at her glittering eyes, sandy trousers and sex-kitten sneer.

And the boys were certainly out in force at last night's

show. Row upon row of sweaty, hormone-addled disciples packed the front, crumpling submissively under Saffron's steely gaze. The band opened with the rancorous "Drop Dead Gorgeous" that had the ladies wailing iname and frothing at the mouth. This was later followed by the new single "From Rush Hour With Love", a pouty, shouty, power-pop number that is bursting with adolescent attitude, though bears little relation to the film upon which it is based.

While Republica are in possession of an irresistible allure

and a magnificently feisty stage presence, the thrill factor is short-lived as the band's limited repertoire soon became apparent. Though their sing-a-long melodies are instantly captivating and have you jiggling about for the first few bars, closer inspection reveals grating lyrics and clichéd choruses that a gaggle of love-sick sixth-formers might have composed.

Eager to please, each track contains the requisite amount of chart-friendly pop, clattering guitars and penetrating Siouxie Sioux vocals. -

enough to court teenage musos, but sadly not enough to sustain a career.

Republica have a handful of amiable, value-for-money singles that fuse synthesised post-punk rock with shamelessly trite indie pop, but they are ultimately uninspiring. And while the music might not last the course, Saffron, at least, can look forward to a glittering career in television.

A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper

FIONA STURGES

Beat generation

POP

CYPRESS HILL
THE ASTORIA
LONDON

Cypress Hill start their attempt, miraculously for a rap band, at exactly the appointed hour. Muggs is, as usual, nowhere to be seen. It's left to B-Real to bring them to life, and he seems up for the challenge.

To the encouragement of an almost all-white crowd, he leads the band through a set which emphasises their blood-soaked side. *Black Sunday*'s "Ain't Goin' Out Like That" slamming into new song "Checkmate".

B-Real's own good humour is never far away, whether mock-shocked at a suggestion that the crowd might prefer to be at home, "watching Mr Bean or some shit", or ritually asking for a take. He's showed one, and exhales into the dark, Robert Mitchum cool. It's in

such moments that Cypress Hill instil the warmth on which live hip-hop thrives.

But the qualities that make their new work effective are not so easily achieved. B-Real's rap shoot by so fast they can't be heard, and the chasm in intent between, say, the stoner reverie, "Insane in the Brain", and the brutal "Steel Magnolia" is flattened.

Muggs's trademark sirens are mere embellishment, and the night is soon reduced to hip-hop's most basic component: the beat, thumped with chest-rattling force.

As at any rock show, it's all half the crowd want. But when Cypress Hill encore with the sound of guitars (from the album's "Lightning Strike"), you pine again for the layers that have been lost. The band leave after only an hour. Time enough for a dance. Not nearly enough time, or space, for the more complex pleasures they're capable of.

NICK HASTED

Passion underplayed

CLASSICAL

ANGELA HEWITT
WIGMORE HALL
LONDON

G minor Sonata. She had brought in a Bosendorfer – lighter in tone than a Steinway, and well-suited to its equivalent minor, and the A major and minor, the uncharacteristically suffered some small memory lapses, possibly triggered by a spate of unduly noisy coughing in the audience. There were no more accidents in a splendid choice of programme, yet Hewitt never quite overcame an element of self-consciousness. Nor could we forget her rather startling image, armoured, rather than dressed, in a stunning outfit of shimmering gold that seemed ideal for something in the dark.

One of Hewitt's specialities is Messiaen, and after the interval she played six of his early Preludes. Her cool, transparent delicacy seemed ideal for something in the dark.

the rainbow-like chord clusters of "Les sons impalpables du réve", but however soft some of the other pieces were meant to be, I still wished for more depth in the piano sound and greater projection. When called upon to be dramatic, in the punchy opening of "Un réve dans le vent", she was fine.

She was also razor-sharp in the stern admonitions of Liszt's *Dante Sonata*, nor ineffective in the way she opened the whirlwind section in smoky obscurity. But there's no substitute for a performance of this visionary work that is overwhelming and all-consuming, and though Hewitt played it very well, passionate abandon is not part of her artistic make-up.

Surprisingly, the thing I enjoyed best in the whole evening was her third and final encore, a simple transcription of Richard Strauss's song "Morgau", in which she spun out an exquisitely protracted singing line to perfection.

ADRIAN JACK

Jonathan Kent's 'powerful and pulverising' production

Maria Björnson's 'elegantly gorgeous' designs

Racine's masterpiece' André Maurois / FINANCIAL TIMES

Ted Hughes' new version 'continually explodes with emotion' Charles Seaton / DAILY TELEGRAPH

GREATLY DIGNIFIES THE WEST END ROLL ON, BRITANNICUS Alan Bennett / THE GUARDIAN

July 16 1998

I am art, therefore I am

Gavin Turk doesn't need to look far to find a fitting subject for his art. What better than ... Gavin Turk. Self-congratulatory nonsense, or does the Brit-pack star actually have something to say? By Judith Palmer

Gavin Turk was no doubt the kind of boy who spent his adolescence re-drafting his signature over the outside of his pencil case, rough book, duffel bag, his arm or any other available surface.

The years weren't wasted: he's perfected a very nice signature. Well, it's a rather nice name, Gavin Turk. In fact, young Turk's finest asset is probably his name. And how fully he capitalises on it. Most artists sign their work. Turk just signs his name, and it is the work.

Ever obsessed with the cult of self, Turk's final year show at the Royal College of Art consisted of an empty sculpture studio, bearing a discrete circular blue plaque with the words "Gavin Turk Sculptor worked here, 1989-1991" on it. College Rector Jocelyn Stevens withheld his degree; and the young British art-world fell at his feet.

Turk's new solo exhibition at the South London Gallery, "The Stuff Show", sticks with his favourite topic: Gavin Turk, "Narcissistic, or what?" muttered every punter, hang on cue, as they entered the space.

There's a helpful quote from fellow British artist Sam Taylor-Wood outside, for anyone who makes the same mistake. "Gavin is special because he is totally inseparable from his work - but at the same time it's not narcissistic or even like self-portraiture," she says. "It's so bizarre that the work is about him, yet at the same time it could be about somebody else called Gavin Turk. It's like the portrait of an anonymous man."

With gulf-like that in your defence, it's no wonder Turk attracts a routinely hostile response. A shame, as Turk's work is actually fairly like



able. Dominating the show is a life-size wax-work self-portrait - within a vitrine - of Turk as Marat, dead in his bath. It is a close pastiche of David's 1783 painting of the assassinated French revolutionary, via the Royal Academy's private viewing of Sensation - in piss-stained trousers and newspaper-wrapped feet. A ginton for the self-referential, *Burn* strikes the same pose as his Sensation wax-work *Poy* with Turk dressed as Sid Vicious posing as Warhol's Elvis and to crown it all *Oil*, a huge photo triptych of Turk dressed as a bum, points limply down at *Burn* while *Burn* peers at yet another photo self-portrait.

They are everywhere. A big fresh-faced photo head with eyes closed in *Portrait of Something that I'll Never Really See*; then a light-box mounted portrait with flaky khaki mud-pack, smirking demonically like Grant Mitchell in *Apocalypse Now* in his *A Man Like Mr Kurtz*. It makes quite an impact as it's the only Turk here with his eyelids open.

They are obviously intended as expressions of banality, but most of the cover versions still don't do much: a Magritte-style portrait in a suit with an egg for a head; a Jasper Johns-type fleecy DIY paint-roller

An interesting choice of alter ego. Marat - the venerated radical who fell from public favour. His body was committed to the Pantheon with full public honours, then cast out 15 months later amid popular execration. There also is a scarorous private joke at play. Marat, of course, took to his bath as relief from a nasty skin disease contracted while hiding in the Parisian sewers, while Turk's self-portraits seem to reveal the scaly, desiccated hands of an artist who has spent too much time dabbling with toxic resins.

Ironically, the most pleasing works are those neat, confident, well-practised signatures, as omnipresent as a global corporate brand name. *One Thousand, Two Hundred and Thirty Four Eggs* has tightly-packed rows of empty eggshells, glued like ping-pong balls undulating across a canvas, with his shadowy autograph tidily nibbled out across their surface. Opposite, more white on white, looking like an embossed deep-pile fancy-hotel bathmat is *Constellation* with nearly four metres of teeny white polyester beads signed in elegant relief.

Above it all, mounted on tasteful neo-classical roundels are two big blobs of chewing gum, shiny smears of yellow resin, thumbtacked onto the walls (*PK1 & PK2*). A yobish mark of disrespect to his own show, that spat-out gum might as well be Turk's official acknowledgement of the guiding forces of Brit-pack art: the throwaway, and fraudulent, emptiness and groundless ego.

Amid all this brazen hugeness, you could easily miss one drab little photo, *Draught Effect 98*, a panoramic 360 degree shot of the gallery, with every exhibit wrapped in brown drapes. This is the latest chapter in Turk's ambitious self-mythology, for the artist apparently opted to leave his show covered up throughout the private viewing. He does, after all, know one thing about young British art - what really matters is being seen and soaking up the free Becks.

Gavin Turk, The Stuff Show, South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Rd SE5 (0171-703 6120) to 18 Oct



Gavin Turk's 'Marat' wax figure comes complete with blancmange nipples, and body-hair straight from the barber's floor. Inset, Turk's self-portrait. John Mason (main photo) / Stephen White

Ewan McGregor: his life and slender times

A famous publisher has asked you to write a biography of the star of *Trainspotting*. First, a bit of self-congratulation is in order, then you have to write the bloody thing. And quick. By Xan Brooks

ABOUT a year ago, I wrote up an interview for publication in *The Big Issue* magazine. The article amassed precisely two pieces of feedback. The first was an Outraged-of-Oldham type letter complaining that the picture of Ewan McGregor smoking a Marlboro on the cover set a terrible example to the youth of Britain. The second was a phone-call from André Deutsch publishers asking if I'd be interested in writing McGregor's biography. All things considered, it was a better response than normal.

Initially, though, the second reaction troubled me rather more than the first. Because celebrity biogs are weird. Traditionally these 20th-century phenomena tend to occupy polarised and schizophrenic landscapes. They are either gushing hagiographies or poisonous Kit-Kat-like muck-rakers. Added to this, a book about Ewan McGregor posed an extra hurdle. At the time of Deutsch's call, the *Trainspotting* star was all 26 years of age; a middle-class Scot from an unremarkable past and a swift crop of good pictures to his name. Note to prospective authors: one care for any arrogance in being handed a book deal is the knowledge that its sub-



Ewan McGregor, reluctant subject UPPA

ject is younger, richer and immeasurably better looking than you. There were other, more pressing problems. Without the luxury of an agent, I had to wrangle for money myself (although knowing there was no agent to skim 10 per cent off the top was some consolation). I also had to negotiate the direction Deutsch's book should take. One possible way around McGregor's relative lack of life, I reckoned, was to use him as a conduit; the symbol for some emergent renaissance in the British film industry in general. The publishers were on for this. The man himself was not. Smugly confident that McGregor would consent to a few further interviews, I was brought up short when he wired back that "when there's a book to be written I'll write it myself". In that instant, *Choose Life* (the publisher's suggested title) hopped from prospective authorised biography to actual unauthorised biography, and I was forced to scour about for information.

Fortunately, I had a stockpile of old interviews, while my regular film editor job at *The Big Issue* gave me access to various actors and directors who had some previous connection with McGregor. This was gratuitous moonlighting. Discussing her new and relevant film, *The Hanging Garden*, with *Shallow Grave* actress Kerry Fox, I abruptly veered off with a hopefully casual chewing-the-fat tone: "so yeah, what was it like working with Ewan McGregor?" Her stalled, startled look (and innumerable others like her) is an abiding image of that manic time.

The last 11 months have been a bit of a blur. What do you do when you have between January and April to write 60,000 words on a 26-year-old who isn't co-operating with the project? Well, to be honest, you wing it. You interview everyone you can grab hold of, you plunder your own archives, you contextualise as best you can and yes, you use cuttings; those shameful, second-hand goods that all biographers fall back on. And

then you try to fit them all together. In some sort of order. In a very short period of time, praying all the while that it makes some sort of sense, that it sheds some light on the subject matter. Don't get me wrong. Writing still doesn't feel like a proper job. Compared with, say, working the deep-fat fryer or resurfacing the A40, it's a doddle. But on this occasion it flitted with being just a tad too much of a good thing.

Compared with regular journalism, the publishing world is viewed as a soulful and sanctified realm, a haven for the genuine artist. Certainly, the people working there seem a lot more civilised - the editors, designers and publicists I worked with at André Deutsch all proved endlessly more grounded, informed and tolerant than your average newspaper or magazine type. But in the end, the two disciplines are pretty similar. The same time imperative, the same commercial intent, the same dash to hit the shelves before the topic turns

cold. And at the end of the day, *Choose Life* is just an extended piece of journalism. It profiles an up-and-coming personality and maps out a fledgling scene. Its contemporaneity, its sense of a story that's still running, is both its weakness and its strength. Thus far the book has had what is known in the trade as a "mixed reception". The film magazines have slagged it, other publications think it's fine.

Inevitably, my own feelings are in conflict. I'm proud that I did the book and pleased with a lot of the stuff inside. At the same time, I regard *Choose Life* much as I imagine a parent must regard a well-meaning but slightly slow and fragile offspring. They're an autonomous entity on the one hand; a worrying mirror of their creator on the other.

You raise them as best you can and then gaze anxiously through the fence as the other lads mill around it in the playground, scrutinising it and prodding for its weakness. You pray it will be all right. Secretly, you hope that the next kid has a bit more going its way.

'Choose Life: Ewan McGregor and the British Film Revival' is published by André Deutsch, £9.99

Two geniuses go 'phut' in Paris

THEATRE

PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE
WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE
LEEDS

GENIUSES were, in their respective fields, to dominate. The bar regulars have a go at predicting what the next hundred years will bring. Their forecasts are either uncannily prescient and very American ("By the end of the century, smoking in restaurants will be banned") or tastelessly accurate ("The city of Hiroshima will be completely modernised"), or spectacularly wrong, or dumb-blondely dizzy ("A yo-yo will be a wonderful thing to play with and a terrible thing to be").

That gives you an idea of the tone to which this play keeps reverting - a facile jokingness which depends upon the lazy superiority of hindsight. When, for example, Brian Shelley's likeable gentle Einstein arrives at the bar, another character

fails to recognise him. "I'm not myself today," he apologises, and musses his combed hair to the trademark mad-scientist look. He's already aware the icon was yet to become.

As for the promised battle of wits, it's waged very weakly and in fits and starts because Martin's script has too short an attention span to pursue any topic with persistence.

"For me," declares Ben Walker's Picasso, smearing at science, "the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line."

"Likewise," counters Einstein.

It's a neat, if contrived, turn, but the piece fails to take you all that much further into the scientists' ideas and their imaginative implications. Gag-ridden, it also has worrying patches of straight-faced uplift and movie speak.

"So you say that you, too, dream the impossible and bring it into effect," marvels Picasso, recognising a creative kinship across the disciplines. Tom Stoppard's Trustee with its conjunction of Joyce, Tzara

and Lenin, manages to be a hundred times funnier than this, while also sustaining serious debate about the relationship between art and revolution.

The most enjoyable character in Randall Arney's attractively acted production is the bumptious little self-deluded charlatan, Schlemieman (Andrew Nyman) who is convinced he is going to become one of the century's household names because of the potty "inflexible and very brittle building material" he has invented. Martin has him conceitedly deprecating the two real future giants and coming up, as if inspired, with tired old traditional ideas - saying "cheese" for photographs, putting dances in pointy hats - that he feels will further seal his bid for immortality.

An amusing lesson in the parochialism of self-regard, the character refreshes a play you don't need to be Einstein to recognise as intellectually thin and disappointing.

PAUL TAYLOR

CD OF THE DAY

JANACEK: STRING QUARTET NOS 1 AND 2
GUARNERI QUARTET (RECORDED 1996)
PHILIPS 456 574-2

PHILIPS'S NEW coupling challenges at least two understandable preconceptions: that Czech ensembles are the best exponents of Janacek's music, and that a 41-minute CD at full price cannot hold its own when good, better-value alternatives are in generous supply. What marks these performances out as particularly special is their warmth and spontaneity.

Both pieces date from the glorious, late phase of Janacek's career when virtually everything he composed was an expression of his infatuation with a girl 38 years his junior. They are confessional quartets; music that had to be written and that couldn't possibly have been otherwise. The First Quartet is

the shorter of the two, a hot-blooded, unpredictable essay, where sudden dramatic interjections and restless rhythmic patterns are leavened by passages of great lyrical beauty.

It's a sort of stream of consciousness that somehow establishes its own form. Janacek's specific inspiration was the novel, *Kreutzer Sonata*, by Leo Tolstoy, and the seething tensions of marital jealousy that fill the book are granted a musical soundtrack to match.

The playing of the Guarneri Quartet combines heightened sensibilities with a pooled interpretive wisdom that is only possible when a group has been playing together for many years. But don't expect easy listening. There are plenty of rugged accents, and the spur of the moment is never dulled, though in the Second Quartet - the one subtitled "Intimate Letters" which Janacek dedicated specifically to his youthful beloved - the Guarneri Quartet softens the mix with a mellow, reflective quality that pays highest dividends in the outer sections of the gently rocking third movement.

Speed changes are common throughout both works but, again, the Guarneri Quartet is adept at balancing heart and head: everything is superbly controlled, no detail left to chance and phrasal articulation is pin-sharp. The recordings are superb.

ROB COWAN

FILM

Unprotected gay sex, S&M, Aids-revenge fantasies – the New Queer Cinema had no time for PC ethics. But now that generation of directors is moving with the times and making queer films to embrace straight audiences. By Liese Spencer

Queer vision, straight talking

This is my first heterosexual movie," says Gregg Araki of *The Doom Generation*. Released this week, the second instalment of *Teen Apocalypse Trilogy* is a fully provocative stomach-churner, a road movie that satirises the platonic couple-on-the-run genre as a surreal splatter-fest ofised sex and violence. "In the way *Philadelphia* and *Longtime Companion* were gay films for straight people," says Araki, "Doom is straight movie for gay people." Confused? You should be. *Doom Generation*, along with forthcoming movies from *Go Fish* director Rose Scher and *Safe*'s Todd Haynes, is to blur the boundaries between gay and straight, identity politics and entertainment. Swapping PC manifestos for a more the queering of the mainstream, a generation of young film-makers are grouped under the banner of "New Queer Cinema" as escaping low-budget, festival-circuit movies to introduce its subversive aesthetic to a wider audience. The term "New Queer Cinema" was coined at the Sundance film festival in 1992 by Ruby Rich, a Village Voice journalist, to describe a bunch of gay directors united by an unapologetic, in-your-face attitude was a more visceral reaction to the epidemic. A self-styled "irresponsible movie", 1992's *The Living End* featured two HIV-positive lovers on the lam. An angry answer to both the homophobia of the right and the fearful PC caution of the left, it was full of explicit unprotected gay sex, S&M and Aids-inspired revenge fantasies, in which Araki's glamorous outlaws fantasised about going to White House to inject Bush with their blood.

These, then, were the main players of New Queer Cinema, although other film-makers were loosely embraced by the label, including more established directors, such as Gus Van Sant and Derek Jarman. Drawing on the legacy of Cocteau, Warhol, Fassbinder and Kenneth Anger these directors employed experimental methods to describe the diversity of their difference.

"What I loved about the New Queer Cinema," Haynes later told journalists, "wasn't that it was gay film-makers making films about gay people. What I loved was the fact that it was a group of films which all had their different stylistic or formal approaches to the stories they were telling. People were thinking about the way we see the world. Whether we're looking at a gay character or a straight character, we will see the world differently."

playful, in-your-face attitude towards their sexuality. Eschewing red-ribbon liberal rhetoric of the '80s era, these film-makers were interested in offering a "body art" of positive gay representation, in twisting narrative and generic conventions to explore ideas of social alienation and the construction of identity, in particular "vianity".

Tom Kahn's 1992 post-modern fable piece *Swoon* used the story of the infamous Twenties child-killers Leopold and Loeb to describe how society pathologises homosexuality in the act of defining it. Iynes's feature *Poison* had covered similar ground the year before. A queer portmanteau movie, it connected Jean Genet with B-movie sci-fi and rites-of-passage docu-drama to produce an elegant and intellectually rigorous response to hysterical media representations of homosexuality and AIDS.

As its original title, *Fuck The World*, suggests, Araki's first feature

Rose McGowan (above) in *The Doom Generation*, directed by Gregg Araki (right). "It's a sort of *Last Tango in Paris* for teenagers," he says of his movie

In a bid for broader distribution, the muscular gay sex of 'The Living End' and 'Poison' has been replaced by censor-friendly off-screen orgasms and a more diffuse homoeroticism.

have been tamed from sexual predators into pet best friends: The Afflicted Other as The Object of My affection.

For their part, many queer directors are using bigger budgets, mixed casts and conventional narratives to make more commercial pictures. *Doom Generation* abandons the shoot-and-run "guerrilla" tactics of Araki's previous films for polished 35mm imagery and a kinetic MTV take on juvenile delinquency. Araki's HIV-positive out-

straight exploitation flicks such as *Natural Born Killers*.

Haynes's forthcoming glam rock epic, *Velvet Goldmine*, looks back to the Seventies as a time when gender-bending role play and sexual and sartorial experimentation escaped from gay subculture into the mainstream. Rather than the Nineties' apolitical assimilation of gay ideas and aesthetics, *Goldmine*'s nostalgic period piece sees the Seventies' queering of the mainstream as a radical moment in which personal free-



Rose McGowan (above) in *The Doom Generation*, directed by Gregg Araki (right). "It's a sort of *Last Tango in Paris* for teenagers," he says of his movie

dom went hand in glove with glam's concept of identity as performance.

"It was a period when the integrationist spirit was still very much alive" says Haynes, "and androgyny and bisexuality were very much in vogue. I tend to see it as a more progressive time than now."

Troche's new feature, (still without a distributor), is more upbeat about the Nineties. Made for £2.2 million, it presents a farcical ronde of chic London relationships that highlights the liberating mutability of contemporary sexual identity.

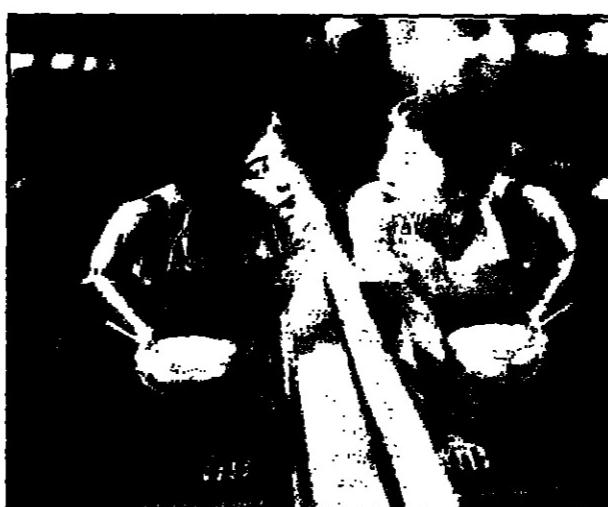
Of all the New Queer directors, Kahn has probably stayed closest to his low-budget, experimental roots, writing (in 1996) the screenplay for *Office Killer*, the camp pastiche on office politics, alienation and female identity by Cindy Sherman, an American photographer. Like his contemporaries, however, Kahn's recent work shows a move away from a singular, affirmative identification with male gayness towards a broader queer aesthetic.

and *Poison* has been replaced by censor-friendly off-screen orgasms and a more diffuse homoeroticism. Coitus interruptus figures heavily (just as James Duval and Jonathan Schaech are about to consummate their relationship in *Doom Generation*, a group of homophobes intervene; in *Nowhere*, the last installment of the *Teen Apocalypse Trilogy*, one of two lust-filled boys just happens to turn into a cockroach). There again, perhaps the characters to disturb the hetero sexual norm. Doom's Schaech may seduce Rose McGowan, but it's the desire between Schaech and Duya that really drives the film. Similarly, the real romance in *Velvet Goldmine* is not between Jonathan Rhys-Meyer's glam god Brian Slade and wife Toni Colette, but between Slade and Ewan McGregor's grunge icon Curt Wild.

icon Curt Wild. By appropriating mainstream styles and ideas, these queer movies reveal their artifice, slyly positing free-floating desire as an alternative to happy-ever-after heterosexuality. As Araki says of *Doom*: "It's heterosexual in a very queer way, which is something that is really interesting for me. I think that of the movies I've made it's the most subversive... I call it *Last Tango in Paris* for teenagers."

DOUBLE BILL

JULIAN HENRIQUE, DIRECTOR OF 'BABY MOTHER', ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING
CHUNGKING EXPRESS DIR. WANG KAR-WAI (1995) BLACK ORPHEUS DIR. MARCEL CAMUS (1958)



'Chungking Express' and 'Black Orpheus' – urban films in very different environments

THESE ARE both urban films. *Chungking Express* is like a 21st-century Metropolis set in the drug stores and underground eateries in Tokyo, while *Black Orpheus* takes place during the carnival in Rio de Janeiro. But these are very different urban environments - the old city and the post-modern city, if you like.

The post modern city in *Chungking Express* is flowing with images, neon colour, blur and movement shot very brilliantly. When I saw *Chungking Express* I was very much drawn to this as a cinema language to express urban movement and the dismemberment of people. The cinematographer Christopher Doyle's most recent film *Happy Together* was also directed by Wang Kar-Wai. I am a great fan of both. Doyle has pioneered a cinematic style which is very expressive. Such energy and movement are the key elements in films I like.

mythical present. It takes the Orpheus myth about the god of music going into the underworld to rescue Persephone. In that underworld there is also the underworld of a city, the gangster land and the unconscious come together and we

go into the deep motivations of where we are coming from.

Black Orpheus was a pioneering film in terms of black film-making. The director was a Frenchmen and it was done at a time when there was a lot of interest in the new black

world. Jean Paul Sartre was discussing negritude - an idea which tries to point to the essence of black-ness in terms of culture and aesthetic. By setting the ancient Greek myth in a black carnival underworld it was taking a very specific and

perhaps unusual setting and showing how the archetypal and recurring myth can function in a different place. And, of course, the use of colour for both night-time and carnival costumes is absolutely splendid. There is one amazing

scene when Orpheus dies and climbs up a hillside by a shanty town, falls and is impaled on a huge cactus.

It's the idea of ancient timelessness and the Post-Modern clashing together in these films which makes them work well together. There is also a very interesting contrast between the two in the use of colour. *Black Orpheus* is in CinemaScope with the old Technicolor colour stock look with its contrast of reds and blues. It's a colour quality characteristic of films in the late-Fifties. It contrasts with a modern film stock in *Chungking Express* which registers colour in a completely different manner. It's more bleached out, a kind of alienated look completely an-

**INTERVIEW BY
JENNIFER RODGER**

Short changed

How does the British Short Film Festival survive when audiences, producers, and even film-makers prefer features? Charlotte O'Sullivan talks to festival organiser Amanda Casson

Basically he became very violent," says Katherine Campbell, "and I was beat up several times, under Huey's direct hand or by his directors." "Huey" is Huey P Newton. Campbell is a woman who joined the Black Panthers as a ferociously idealistic young girl. In Sienna McLean's documentary *Still Revolutionaries* – one of 380 films which will be shown as part of the British Short Film Festival – Campbell and a fellow ex-party member detail the implosion of a movement they believe in to this day. It is a short, sharp and shocking history lesson. And it lasts all of 16 minutes.

Sadly, few people will see this film. Like short men, short films have to fight to be taken seriously (and do not always succeed). Amanda Casson, who has been running the festival for 10 years, is used to this. "There's no outlet," she fumes, as I drag her from her cassette-crammed office for a quick chat. "Short films aren't seen as an art form in themselves. Miramax pick up a short film and run it before a feature, but it's once every three years and inevitably it'll be a film with stars in it." Soon-to-be-released *Desserts*, starring Ewan McGregor, is a case in point.

The general public is no better. Mostly, says Casson, they are drawn by major names – Scorsese shorts say, or commercials by Bergman. In 1995 Casson had a whole section devoted to the short films of Hollywood's big shots. It was a sell out.

What of the festival's other, more specialist punters? By Casson's own admission, the rest of the festival's attendees tend to be members of the industry (travelling incognito) or young, wannabe film-makers (waiting to be approached). In other words, their eyes are on the feature-prize, because that is where the prestige and money lie.

Helen Apple – whose *Portrait of Mr Pink*, a wonderfully tender, 15-minute study of an old, lonely Jamaican man, can be seen in this year's festival – says it is not like that for everyone. She usually works on documentaries of 50 minutes, but chose to pursue this project because "I'm not interested in making loads of money and I love getting into a little world". She agrees, however,



Festival organiser Amanda Casson, right, and Panther Huey P Newton, above Neville Elder/AP

that most of her film-maker friends are a bit snooty about the genre and "want to do the long thing".

So are short films a lost cause? Jeremy Howe is the series producer of BBC2's *10x10* and *The Talent* at the British Short Film Festival, a one-off programme that will feature "four of the best" films. He allows that TV heads like Michael Jackson "are not going to build their evenings around short films", because "great swathes of short films are wearing". But he also feels these mini-flicks offer unique opportunities. "It's like the difference between a lyric poem and an epic one." He warms to his theme. "Some people, like Chris Newby for example, make features that are far less exciting than their shorts. Another thing to remember about shorts is

audiences are often prepared to take greater risks – you can push them further because they know it's going to take up little of their time."

As with Howe, Casson's job is to select the good ones from the dross. No easy matter, as Casson will tell you. Of the 5,000 entries which she perused over weekends and evenings ("I have no life," she admits cheerfully), most were "deeply deeply bad – out of focus when they are not supposed to be or so self-indulgent it's untrue". Originality was somewhat lacking too. "They all want to do *Reservoir Dogs* in the docklands," she says with a deep sigh. "It's a very easy genre to copy – all you need are four rough-looking chaps."

On top of that, she has marketed sponsors (including Metro Goldwyn Mayer, American Airlines and Cham-

pagne Gossel) to contend with. "They're never interested in the stuff I like," she mutters. "There's a wonderful, harrowing film this year called *Extinction*, 35 about disabled children in Poland." The sponsors choose the various prizes. Casson sniffs: "So it's bound not to get anything."

That said, Casson is a woman prepared to compromise with the mainstream. She is delighted, for instance, with the commercial success of many of her young finds. "Jamie Thaves," she confides, "was picked up by John Stewart of Oil Factory Films – he's the brother of [Eurythmics' Dave Stewart, which is another connection because, of course, Dave Stewart makes a lot of short films." Ye gods, the heart sinks. "Anyway, Jamie's very famous. He did a Holsten Pils advert!" Another favourite,



South Africa's Koto Bololo, is married to "a very famous and white model". Casson leans forward confidentially. "He's very black, a very political animal, but she's got lots of money, so that's good!"

This mixture of know-how and innocence is probably what keeps the British Short Film Festival going. And 1998's showing certainly contains its sparkly gems. Amongst what Casson fondly calls her "400 piles of crap" there's a new 14-minute documentary from George Hickenlooper who helmed *Hearts of Darkness* about the making of *Apocalypse Now* on cult Seventies director Monte Hellman. There is also a perfectly strange but riveting entry from Jay Rosenblatt, *Human Remains*, which focuses on the lives of five dictators, including Mussolini and Hitler, and begins, "I always liked chocolate éclairs." There are also way too many films by young men expert at the regurgitation of Hieronymus Bosch paintings. But hey, that goes with the territory.

What keeps Casson going is her belief that short films are "tighter" than the average movie. "Jim Jarmusch still makes short films, so does Mike Leigh; it's a way of keeping themselves disciplined." Does her job not make the rest of the world seem strangely slack? Casson laughs. "I went to see a preview of *Love is the Devil*. The girl sitting next to me said 'God, that must have seemed like two days to you, not two hours!'" Is that how it felt? Casson surveys the sky diplomatically. Then she looks down at her watch, presses her bundle of papers to her chest and scurries away.

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS

As Good As It Gets (15)

available to rent now
A HANDY equation for Hollywood comedies: the degree to which an apparently irredeemable character exhibits non-PC sentiments in the opening reel is invariably in direct proportion to the sentimental claptrap said character will be spouting come the end of the popcorn. And so it goes with Jack Nicholson's foul-mouthed, obsessive-compulsive novelist, Melvin Udall. He can't stand his homosexual artist neighbour, Simon (Greg Kinnear), dines out with sterilised cutlery, and demands to be served by the same waitress, Carol (Helen Hunt) each time he visits his favourite restaurant.

Udall's belligerence trades are lent a degree of comic force by Nicholson's typically showy performance, but the rest of the screenplay works overtime to stone for Udall's misanthropy. Carol, as a single mother burdened with an ill child, is saved from a ghastly canonisation only by Helen Hunt's excellent performance, while Simon seems to function solely as a second gauge by which to judge Udall's prejudices. Against this background, the developing relationship between Melvin and Carol may be inevitable, but it's no less ludicrous.

Adapted from Elmore

Leonard's *Rum Punch*, the film centres on the attempts of the eponymous 44-year-old air-stewardess (Pam Grier) to flee the gun-runner (Samuel L Jackson) for whom she moonlights, and the police, who have coerced her into informing on her boss. Her accomplice is fiftysomething bail bondsman, Max Cherry (Robert Forster), and it's a nice irony that, like the last chance middle-aged Max and Jackie seize, B-movie regulars Grier and Forster make the most of their lead roles. While handling the tension of the sting well, Tarantino reveals a sensitivity for character that has always distinguished Leonard's books but which had been absent from the director's work. *Jackie Brown's* minor figures – Bridget Fonda's fading surf chick in particular – justify the trip to the video store alone.

In the Company of Men (18)

available to rent from next Wednesday

WHAT IS really disturbing about Neil Labute's black comedy isn't the viciousness of its male protagonists' project – Chad and Howard plan to destroy a woman to avenge what they perceive as female treachery in the bedroom and the boardroom – but the mundanity that Labute divines in their actions. Ball-busting Chad (Aaron Eckhart) and timid Howard (Matt Malloy) bitch and brag their way around their almost exclusively male office, indulging in the kind of macho posturing that finds its apotheosis in their plans for Christine (Stacy Edwards), a vulnerable, deaf temp. Chad and Howard plan to romance her simultaneously and then

RUSHES

Jennifer Jason Leigh and Harvey Keitel have had to pull out and the studio has found it difficult to quash rumours surrounding the film's tortuous gestation. Kubrick can count himself lucky, for instance, that one of the world's most-sought-after stars, Tom Cruise, has kept his schedule free for the production – his last big-screen appearance

was in *Jerry Maguire* and the actor was required for reshoots earlier this year.

WITH MEL Gibson about to appear at a multiplex near you as *Martin Lethal Weapon* Riggis for the fourth time, news comes that Universal Pictures is gearing up for a fourth installment of the film that set the Australian on the road to Hollywood, *Mad Max*. Twelve years after the last of George

Gibson's representatives, however, claimed not even to have been contacted about the possibility of their man sporting his Outback mullet for a fourth time. The actor has come a long way since *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome*, and now commands a salary per film in excess of the total cost of the original trilogy. The 42-year-old has already stated that he's unlikely to line up for a *Lethal Weapon 5*, and it's believed that then a fifth *Mad Max* may be beyond Gibson.

BEST LEAVE the stuntwork to James Cameron and his box of CGI tricks. Police in Michigan, USA, have reported the drowning of a 25-year-old woman who allegedly decided to adopt Kate Winslet's spirit of ecstasy pose on the prow of *Titanic* in the film of the same name. The woman died when she lost her balance and toppled off the pleasure boat, banging her head as she did so.

MIKE HIGGINS



THE CHARTS

LONDON BOX OFFICE

TITLE	SCREENS	WEEK'S TAKINGS (£)
1 Saving Private Ryan	17	234,236
2 Lock Stock & 2 Smoking...	13	111,743
3 The Last Days of Disco	10	52,803
4 The Horse Whisperer	9	46,679
5 The Spanish Prisoner	7	33,154
6 The X Files	8	28,486
7 Armageddon	11	27,850
8 The Land Girls	5	17,121
9 Le Bossu	3	13,990
10 Dr Dolittle	7	9,945

US BOX OFFICE

TITLE	SCREENS	WEEK'S TAKINGS (\$)
1 SAVING PRIVATE RYAN	2,545	10,920,201
2 BLADE	2,375	10,788,664
3 THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO	2,807	8,825,090
4 THE HORSE WHISPERER	1,800	5,515,231
5 EVER AFTER	1,999	4,348,419
6 54	1,869	4,025,576
7 WHY DO FOOLS FALL...	1,377	3,540,408
8 SNAKE EYES	1,912	3,331,861
9 THE PARENT TRAP	2,045	3,202,708
10 STELLA GOT HER GROOVE...	1,340	3,019,496



Complacent male-bonding rituals continue to enthral the public, but this time in Spielberg's Second World War Europe as opposed to Guy Ritchie's East End. *Stateside*, *Saving Private Ryan* improves – having slipped to number 2, the Farrelly Brothers' wilfully dumb flick is back on top.

"A TRIUMPH... makes you want to get up and dance!"

– Richard Williams, THE GUARDIAN

"Wicked, delicious, funny, immaculately acted"

Martin Hoyle, FINANCIAL TIMES

"Deft, bittersweet and very funny. Beckinsale is a revelation"

Geoff Andrew, TIME OUT

"Very dry, very funny. His fondest and wittiest work"

Ryan Gilbey, THE INDEPENDENT

Whit Stillman's
The Last Days of
DISCO 15
History is made at night.

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS WHIT STILLMAN'S "THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO" CHLOE SEVIGNY, KATE BECKINSALE, CHRIS EIGEMAN, MATT KEESLAR, HARRISON ASHTON, MATTHEW ROSS, TARA SUBKOFF, BURR STEERS, DAVID THORNTON, JAI DAVIS, MICHAEL WEATHERLY, ROBERT SEAN LEONARD, JENNIFER DEALS, GENE HOPKINS, SHINTA BARDEN, SCOTT WATSON, GINGER TOOGES, PAUL SPURGEON, PETER AFTERNAN, MARK SHAZZ, JOHN SLOSS, CELIA KATE ROQUE, EDIMON ROQUE, ANDREW HAFITZ, JAY PIRES, JOHN THOMAS, Whit Stillman, Whit Stillman

NOW SHOWING

WARNER VILLAGE, LEICESTER SQUARE, 0171 580 2000, 0171 580 2001, 0171 580 2002, 0171 580 2003, 0171 580 2004, 0171 580 2005, 0171 580 2006, 0171 580 2007, 0171 580 2008, 0171 580 2009, 0171 580 2010, 0171 580 2011, 0171 580 2012, 0171 580 2013, 0171 580 2014, 0171 580 2015, 0171 580 2016, 0171 580 2017, 0171 580 2018, 0171 580 2019, 0171 580 2020, 0171 580 2021, 0171 580 2022, 0171 580 2023, 0171 580 2024, 0171 580 2025, 0171 580 2026, 0171 580 2027, 0171 580 2028, 0171 580 2029, 0171 580 2030, 0171 580 2031, 0171 580 2032, 0171 580 2033, 0171 580 2034, 0171 580 2035, 0171 580 2036, 0171 580 2037, 0171 580 2038, 0171 580 2039, 0171 580 2040, 0171 580 2041, 0171 580 2042, 0171 580 2043, 0171 580 2044, 0171 580 2045, 0171 580 2046, 0171 580 2047, 0171 580 2048, 0171 580 2049, 0171 580 2050, 0171 580 2051, 0171 580 2052, 0171 580 2053, 0171 580 2054, 0171 580 2055, 0171 580 2056, 0171 580 2057, 0171 580 2058, 0171 580 2059, 0171 580 2060, 0171 580 2061, 0171 580 2062, 0171 580 2063, 0171 580 2064, 0171 580 2065, 0171 580 2066, 0171 580 2067, 0171 580 2068, 0171 580 2069, 0171 580 2070, 0171 580 2071, 0171 580 2072, 0171 580 2073, 0171 580 2074, 0171 580 2075, 0171 580 2076, 0171 580 2077, 0171 580 2078, 0171 580 2079, 0171 580 2080, 0171 580 2081, 0171 580 2082, 0171 580 2083, 0171 580 2084, 0171 580 2085, 0171 580 2086, 0171 580 2087, 0171 580 2088, 0171 580 2089, 0171 580 2090, 0171 580 2091, 0171 580 2092, 0171 580 2093, 0171 580 2094, 0171 580 2095, 0171 580 2096, 0171 580 2097, 0171 580 2098, 0171 580 2099, 0171 580 2100, 0171 580 2101, 0171 580 2102, 0171 580 2103, 0171 580 2104, 0171 580 2105, 0171 580 2106, 0171 580 2107, 0171 580 2108, 0171 580 2109, 0171 580 2110, 0171 580 2111, 0171 580 2112, 0171 580 2113, 0171 580 2114, 017

EDUCATION

www.independent.co.uk

Where are all the teachers?

Teacher recruitment is in crisis. But are the millions spent on the Teacher Training Agency's advertising campaign really going to make a difference? Many think not. By Emma Haughton



Anne Hubbard: 'I couldn't believe this was happening to Julian. He had been studying for nearly seven years'

JULIAN'S STORY

'You can't teach kids. You're too old'

No one forgets a good teacher. So says the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), which is using the lure of immortality to win over high-flyer graduates in its multimillion-pound teacher recruitment campaign.

So far however, the catchy slogan, cinema ad, telephone hotline and website have made little impact on prospective applicants. Figures from the Graduate Teacher Training Registry show that this year's take-up of PGCE and Bachelor of Education courses is well down on 1997. Around 80 per cent of BED courses had vacancies and joined clearing, while mid-August figures showed sharp drops in applications across most subjects. Mathematics was one of the worst hit, with PGCE applications down 22 per cent on the previous year; more than 60 per cent below government targets. Science and geography were also down 15 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Only English, IT and PE made small gains on last year.

Although even leading teacher training institutions have struggled to fill their courses, few are surprised. 'We've been predicting this nightmare for a number of years,' says Ted Wragg, professor of education at Exeter University, who points out that a still buoyant economy is providing many alternatives in graduate employment. 'When the economy is poor, people are desperate to get into teacher training, even just as a hedge against not getting other kinds of job.'

Applications to teacher training may well be an accurate barometer of the UK economy, but the current dearth is not just a matter of economics. Nor is it simply a question of money. Although the autumn Green Paper on teachers' earnings is expected to propose performance-related pay in an attempt to attract more high-flyers, Wragg thinks it is reputation, rather than

WITH the downturn in applications to be trainee teachers, universities are crying out for good, high-flying candidates for their courses. Or so you would think:

Yet two weeks ago Julian Hubbard started a teaching job in Uganda after spending two years trying unsuccessfully to get on to a postgraduate teacher training course or a teaching job in an independent school in Britain.

Before taking the Ugandan teaching job he had been reduced to taking a job as a security guard to help make ends meet. He and his wife, Anne, had had their finances wrecked by Hubbard's decision to give up his antiques

business to return to university

and pursue a life-long dream

of being a secondary school

history teacher. Last week

Anne put their house near

Chepstow on the market prior

to joining him in Uganda. Hubbard was 37 when he decided on a life change. He went to Reading University and got a first in Ancient History. He then accepted a three-year scholarship at the University of Wales in Swansea. After just one year he became a PhD candidate, and at 44 was awarded a doctorate in Ancient History and Civilisation.

Despite having been offered a PGCE place during his first degree, when Hubbard applied for a teacher training place through UCAS while doing his doctorate he was turned down without explanation by all institutions. 'I applied to many universities and hundreds of independent schools, and I was never offered even an interview,' he says.

Anne was equally distraught. 'I just couldn't believe this was happening. Julian had been

studying for nearly seven years and we'd spent our savings, and he couldn't get a job.'

Hubbard believes it was high qualifications and age that stood in his way. 'Despite the Government's rhetoric, there remains a deep-seated suspicion of high academic qualifications amongst the public educational training establishments, together with an almost breathtaking desire to maintain the status quo.'

But Anne wanted an explanation, and wrote to the TTA, Ofsted, the Welsh Office, even Tony Blair; although there was sympathy for Hubbard's predicament, she was advised to go back to the institutions which turned him down. One told her that her husband's application hadn't been worth an interview.

Another university eventually offered him an interview. Hubbard felt the

interviewers were hostile. A few days later a letter arrived saying that they believed he did not understand the nature of history and they considered him too old to fit into a school.

Anne says: 'It has been an absolute nightmare. We are very angry about how this has happened in a climate where they are crying out for qualified teachers. All my husband wanted was to teach history to kids because he really believed that if they could be taught to analyse what happened in the past, they would be better equipped to handle the complex world of today.'

'We have spent every penny trying to make him a teacher and he has been treated in such a humiliating way. It has all ended in disaster.'

EMMA HAUGHTON

remuneration, that is crucial.

'I don't think money is the big issue. Starting salaries in teaching are not seriously off what graduates would get elsewhere.' The principle problem, he says, is the disaffection of current teachers, who have always been the best recruiters of the next generation. 'They are tired of being the butt of society's wrath and are telling people they must be mad to want to do it. Teaching is a job that appeals to people, but they're stopped in their tracks when teachers are always being criticised. It's the most scrutinised job on earth.'

He is particularly scathing of the TTA's recruitment campaign. 'It's

been totally ineffective. There have been lots of inquiries, but very few converting to applications. The ad shows these boring old farts, standing with their backs to the kids, writing on a blackboard, who would be made mincemeat of in a comprehensive. Is that really supposed to attract bright graduates?'

Wragg, too, regards the TTA campaign as fire brigade tactics. 'If you don't burn the place down, you won't have to put the fire out. Of course it's right to remind people of the value of teachers, but it's just addressing the symptoms. You don't change the esteem of a pro-

fession overnight when it's had years of rubbishing. I'm told there are huge gaffaws when the ad comes on in cinemas – probably from the teachers in the audience.'

Others believe government reform has given teaching an increasingly mundane image. Teachers are suffering from the burden of public scrutiny, and the bureaucracy imposed by innovations such as assessment. According to Bethan Marshall, lecturer in education at King's College, it has changed the nature of the profession, 'and what's guaranteed to make the job hateful is the idea that

you spend all your time filling in forms.'

The millions spent on cinema ads does not replace the much clearer message that teaching is about implementing government policy, she believes. 'If you want bright people, you've got to make the profession look more creative, but teachers have to work so much harder now to get the creative scope once took for granted. The literacy hour, for example, is extraordinarily prescriptive.'

But Stephen Hillier, secretary of the TTA, is impatient of such views. 'It's like saying a doctor's freedom is restricted by telling them the most effective surgical methods to use.'

Hillier believes the ad agency has achieved its aim of raising the stakes, as well as doubling the number of inquiries. 'We didn't expect it to have an immediate impact – it would have been great if it had, but the objective was to raise the profile and status of teaching.'

The TTA is also keen to show that those with the combination of skills teachers require will find they can succeed in many other careers.

But as Wragg points out, teachers are already wise to their wider market value, with three-quarters leaving the profession before retirement. Haemorrhaging staff at one end and failing to attract new blood at the other, the profession may find itself caught in a vicious circle of decline. In maths and science, for instance, it's notoriously difficult to recruit high quality teachers. 'You get a cumulative effect where teachers are not especially well qualified to teach these subjects, which in turn doesn't inspire the next generation to teach it themselves.'

No one forgets a good teacher, perhaps, but everyone remembers the bad.

'I like teaching but I won't be a teacher'



KATHERINE'S STORY

IN JUNE this year, I graduated from university with a Bachelor of Education Honours degree. I got a 2:1 and good references on my abilities as a primary school teacher. However, you will not now find me ensconced in a classroom.

I am not alone. There were several of us who realised as graduation loomed that teaching was not for us. We spent many an hour, and longer, discussing whether to teach or not to teach, where our true destinies might lie.

Yet I enjoyed many aspects of the school day. As part of the degree, we were required to undertake the dreaded "teaching experience", which at the end of the course involved undertaking at least 80 per cent of the teaching and full responsibility for the day-to-day running of the classroom. For the majority of the time, the children were a delight and a successful lesson gave a buzz. I worked with some inspirational teachers who were truly dedicated to their profession and to meeting both the educational and emotional needs of the children. There was always a sense of teamwork in the schools that I worked with, everyone pulling together and no one was ever too busy to help and advise.

At the end of the school day, although I was weary, there was usually a feeling of great satisfaction.

The main reason for not joining the profession is that at the end of the school day I knew with unhappy certainty that I would need to spend the rest of the afternoon and evening battling with a never-ending pile of paperwork. Planning, recording, assessing and marking were just a few of the joys that awaited.

Figures from the Department of Education for the year 1995-6 show a significant drop-out from the profession after graduation. Of students completing a PGCE, 32 per cent did not go on to teach – 35 per cent from my course.

Although some of these students may have re-entered the profession after a break, it shows that there is a problem with retaining graduates in the industry. So what is going wrong? The National Union of Teachers, in conjunction with the Teacher Training Agency, surveyed over 3,000 16 to 19-year-olds at the end of last year, with 1,000 responding. The survey asked students to give four factors that would put them off entering the profession. Fifty-five per cent cited long hours and work at home. The main reason, given by 60 per cent of respondents, was misbehaving students. The third and fourth top factors were low pay (44 per cent) and stress (24 per cent).

The bureaucracy nightmare is exacerbated by the class sizes. It is clear that the larger the size of the class, the more paper work there is to do. There has been an effort by the government to tackle the issue of bureaucracy with strong guidelines laid out as to the amount of paperwork that teachers should be doing. However, it remains to be seen whether the schools will take up these guidelines.

The salaries awarded to teachers have always been a problem in the issue of recruitment. The starting salary for a good honours graduate is £14,751, which is below average for graduates. After three years teaching, the salary is 18 per cent lower than average. This increases to a third lower than average after five years. If you then stay in the profession for seven years, the salary will be £22,023. This is the top of the scale and although it is possible to increase earnings by taking on extra responsibilities, there may not be enough financial incentive for doing so.

It remains to be seen whether I will resist the callings of the profession forever. Unless promises of cuts in bureaucracy and rises in pay come to fruition, I cannot envisage myself returning to the industry. Luckily there are teachers, working day in, day out, who strive to give the children in their classes the best possible chance in life.

KATHERINE STOREY

End of the great tuition fee scare

Universities are still filling up, despite the newly introduced £1,000 annual tuition fee. Lucy Hodges examines why



Katie Allen: attending university near her home in an attempt to save money

Richard Rayner

Why is it that the doom mongers have been proved wrong and that students still sign up for university despite the introduction this year of the £1,000 tuition fee? Nationally, figures show there has been no fall in the numbers applying to higher education as young people scramble to get hold of what is called "the knowledge society". There has been no fall in young people applying to university from the lower socio-economic groups and there is even been a rise in the number of English students applying for and being accepted by Scottish universities – something which was not expected at all.

Agreeing to take four years instead of three.

"I think that most students, particularly those leaving school, understand that their chances of a successful and satisfying career are enhanced by going to university," says Martin Harris, chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, which is holding its annual conference this week in Manchester. "Their families are prepared to make the extra investment that helps them to achieve that goal."

Other university bosses agree. "People want higher education," says Steve Wagner, principal of Leeds Metropolitan University. "It's become almost essential now for any decent career and I can have a nice time for three years while you're studying – certainly in Leeds." However, within this "good news" story, there is a more complicated picture.

Although applications from traditional 18-year-old students have held up, those from adults over 21 have declined. That, in itself, reflects a trend, because applications from adults have been on the decline for a number of years. But the drop is slightly bigger this year. It is possible that the £1,000 fee has acted as a deterrent, though it's also possible that the demand from adults for university education has become saturated.

Second, students' tastes are changing, according to Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. Whereas, in the past, they might have chosen a degree leading to one of the "caring" professions such as teaching, social work and nursing, increasingly they are opting for courses that will take them directly into well-paying jobs such as accountants.

That shift may be related to the fees, the phasing out of grants and the student loan scheme, says Higgins. "Students know they'll have a bigger debt to pay off at the end of their graduation, so maybe they're taking subjects that will help them."

Perhaps reflecting this trend, some universities, notably the former polytechnics, are suffering a drop in applications this year – just as some experts predicted. The pattern seems to be that they are being hit in the social sciences and humanities, subjects which are not narrowly vocational and do not lead directly into work. That change is exactly what experts such as Alan Smithers, the Sydney Jones Professor of Education at Liverpool University, predicted would happen in the new higher education marketplace.

THE DAUGHTER of a fitter and a shop assistant in Cleveland, Katie Allen, 18, was not sure she would be able to go to university when the Government announced the new financial arrangements – the £1,000 tuition fee, the phasing out of the grant and the new income-contingent loans scheme. But with two A-levels under her belt and with the active support of her parents, she has decided to take up a place to study social sciences at Teesside, her local university. The big advantage of Teesside is that she can live at home and save on accommodation costs.

The University of East London, for example, is experiencing a drop in demand for degrees in social sciences, including economics and anthropology, and a drift instead to business studies. The university's vice-chancellor, Frank Gould, sees it as part of a trend. Students are beginning to opt for vocational degrees, he thinks. Subjects being hit are sociology, cultural studies and the humanities – but not English.

The University of Hertfordshire, formerly Hatfield Polytechnic, is finding applications down in exactly the same areas, though its overall application numbers are holding up. "We're also seeing problems – really for the first time – in humanities," says Dr Stephen Boffey, director of admissions. "There's one explanation which is that we have quite a lot of mature stu-

dents on our humanities course and mature students are being hit by the fees. But we're not doing at all badly in other areas. Computing is bursting and we're also finding that we're doing very well in sciences, which surprised us, and we're pretty well hitting targets with engineering, which again is going against the trends."

In the course of the applications round this year, Dr Boffey did not find that the £1,000 fee was an issue for students except that he got a lot of people wanting to be released in the clearing process to live near to home. That supports other anecdotal evidence that students (like Katie Allen, above) are choosing to attend the university near where they live to save money.

At the University of North London (UNL) it's a similar picture. Humanities, including

history, philosophy, English and European studies, and social sciences have suffered, whereas the sciences have done better. "It's been very turbulent and there has been significant deterrence of mature students," says vice-chancellor, Brian Roper.

"Applicants are saying: 'Can I have a place and can I take it next year?' and we're saying: 'Why? The fees aren't going to go away' and they're saying: 'We're going to have to save up the money'."

Applications by mature students to UNL are down 15 to 25 per cent this year, according to Roper, and that percentage is significant because the university is so heavily dependent on mature students. They form around three-quarters of the university's intake.

Roper is fed up with the university admissions system which involves students applying before their A level results and receiving offers conditional on students making specified grades. Those who don't make their grades enter the clearing system and take part in a matching procedure which matches students with vacancies. The system creates uncertainty for all concerned. "We really must have a situation – I hope from next year onwards – where students are applying having their results in their hands."

New universities such as UNL were heavy users of the clearing process this year in the hope that it would fill up their courses. Indeed, last Friday, when one of The Independent's clearing supplement appeared, both old and new universities filled up 22 pages of the supplement with their offerings. Some observers have been surprised to see traditional universities

such as Queen Mary and Westfield (QMW) and Royal Holloway colleges in London as well as Sussex University appearing in clearing this year at this late stage. Were they experiencing problems in finding students this year?

The new principal of QMW, Adrian Smith, was not available for comment. A spokeswoman for Royal Holloway said the college had been seeking 400 students through clearing in subjects such as history, management, computer sciences, classics, physics, maths and music. But the college had not lowered its entry requirements or been reduced to advertising. Last week it was still below target in social policy and languages. Sussex said it had not experienced particular problems but in last week's clearing supplement it was still seeking takers across a range of courses.

So, although most vice-chancellors gathering in Manchester this week will be congratulating themselves on their student numbers holding up and on the work they have done to ensure students understand the new financial arrangements and the value of a degree, they will also be aware that the new marketplace in higher education could mean turbulence ahead. They are not counting their chickens.

Dr Michael Goldstein, vice-chancellor of Coventry University, said his university had not yet met its targets on student numbers but expected to do so. At the same time, he couldn't be sure, just as other universities couldn't be sure, that all the students who had signed up would actually turn up when term started. "In some areas we're not sure," he said. "In some areas we're going to get withdrawals."

A nation still hung up on vowel length

THE VIEW FROM HERE



SUSAN BASSNETT

OH DEAR, oh dear! The press has had a field day this summer with the news about the docker's son who became a Cambridge don and then humiliated a girl from Essex during her interview with him to get a place at the university. Journalists streamed onto the field of battle from all sides: the don was brilliant and misunderstood; he had a quirky sense of playful ironic humour; Ms Playle had obviously over-reacted, due to the stress of the interview; she just wasn't sharp enough to cope with a truly penetrating mind.

On the other side countered, Ms Playle was a very bright woman who had been reduced to tears and walked out of the room, unwilling to face a barrage of snobbish ranting from an unpleasant bully who has since been forced to apologise. Widening the terms, some wrote about how incidents like this underline all the attempts to attract students from the state sector to

Oxbridge. Apply to Cambridge and you too might be linguistically challenged. And so one unfortunate episode is then turned into a campaign.

Ms Playle is coming to my own university, where she will be warmly welcomed and where she will, I hope, enjoy her English degree with us. I am sorry that she had such a distressing interview at Cambridge and I admire her courage in going public about it and requesting an apology. But to suggest that one man's bad manners is representative of our ancient universities is ridiculous. We have all met people who show off at the expense of others, and it cannot be said that one institution has a monopoly on arrogance.

Equally ridiculous is the proposition put forward by some that all interviews should be abolished and replaced with paperwork. Interviews are never pleasant, but they serve a very useful purpose,

and an interview for university can help prepare students for job interviews later. At my daughter's school, parents turn up once a year on a Saturday morning and work with the staff on mock interviews for all the A level candidates. Other schools please note.

What depresses me about this case is the importance people in this country still attach to accents.

You can't turn on the radio or TV without encountering dozens of different accents, and yet we are still hung up on the idea of perfect received pronunciation (RP). We must be the only country in the world where an ideal version of the language exists that is not actually spoken in any geographical location.

We may have the idea of a classless society, of cool Britannia and all that, but a lot of ordinary people seem hell-bent on erasing traces of their local origins. Eric Griffiths, the academic in question, started out life as a Liverpool docker's son, and yet seems to have felt that he needed to acquire an accent as camp as a row of pink frilly tents in order to get on in life. Similarly, Lady Thatcher invested time and, presumably, also money in losing her Grantham burr, and she still gets her pronouns wrong. Why do the English do it in this day and age?

The writer is Pro-vice chancellor of the University of Warwick

HAM'S VIEW

FOOTBALL STUDIES

LECTURE HALL

PAY PER VIEW



YOUR VIEWS

Distorted picture of Queen's

IN HIS letter defending the Queen's University, Belfast, Academic Plan (Your Views, EDUCATION, 10 September) Pro-Vice-chancellor Andrew referred to the "discontinuation of a small number of subjects which are no longer viable". It is hard not to feel some sympathy for any academic charged with putting an acceptable spin on some very hasty and unacceptable corporate decisions but Professor Andrew's use of the word "viable" in this context is so esoteric that some explanation is necessary to avert misunderstanding.

Geology is the largest of the departments scheduled for closure at Queen's. It is the only university geology department in Northern Ireland and, though small by UK standards, the largest of five in Ireland, graduating 27 students in 1998, six of them with first class honours. It will soon exist only as a case history of the madness of management driven only by consideration of the next research assessment exercise, playing fantasy football with real careers.

The staff of the department have been told by the Vice-chancellor that closure has nothing to do with financial viability. Nor has visibility anything to do with teaching. Geology is the only science faculty department at Queen's to be graded "excellent" for its teaching provision (Higher Education Funding Council Teaching Quality Assessment, 1995), but that is apparently quite irrelevant.

Geology is being "discontinued", with all the distress and misery this word embodies for staff, students and graduates, simply because the university management believes it is unlikely to obtain Grade 4 in the Research Assessment Exercise of 2001. Geology at Queen's was the smallest, or equal smallest, Earth Science Department to obtain Grade 3 in each of the last two UK assessment exercises (1992 and 1996), and in 1992 the only one to seek and gain that grade in recognition of the applied nature of its research. In the context of size this is a creditable performance. Grade 3 is the average national grade in the Earth Sciences; only Geology teaching departments twice the size of that at Queen's, and the research establishments at Reading and at Newcastle, were awarded research Grades 4 and 5.

Dr BERNARD ANDERSON
Head of Geology Department at Queen's University 1990-96,
School of Geosciences,
The Queen's University of Belfast

As a member of academic staff at Queen's University targeted for early retirement, I wish to make something quite clear to those who have now read Prof Malcolm Andrew's letter.

I do not have a weak research record. I have produced in my 24 years at Queen's 52 publications. This is a meritorious output and my research receives international respect. I am only judged as a weak researcher by the incredible standards now required by Queen's in order to justify retention. My acknowledged contribution to the teaching of plant science at Queen's is seemingly not valued.

I am on the Editorial Advisory Boards for the *Journal of Biological Education* and *Biologist* - both journals of the Institute of Biology. My appointment as a Teaching Quality Assessment specialist reviewer for UK universities over the next two years will best be fulfilled if I remain involved with teaching in my present post.

What is at stake here is our answer to the fundamental question "What is a university?" Universities should be places where there is a symbiosis between teaching and research. Students



Most teachers are genuinely interested in their pupils and liaise with parents in a positive and caring way. See 'No war zone'.

Brian Harris

should always be put first. The worth of an academic should not be judged solely on whether their research reaches a level 4 or above in the research assessment exercise.

Dr PAUL CLIFFORD CBIOL MIBiol
Lecturer, School of Biology and
Biochemistry
The Queen's University of Belfast

Queen's is not in an analogous situation to the universities of Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester to which Prof Andrew compares it. Because of the proliferation of academic institutions in the English regions, it is likely that the needs of the region in teaching, research and development will be met by diverse providers.

The University of Manchester may well compete with its regional counterparts to achieve a high RAE ranking, without fear of leaving vital functions unprovided for. Northern Ireland, with only two degree and post-degree institutions, suffers from a deficit of university provision: the crisis in student places which would normally result is only averted by the fact that we export 40 per cent of our school-leaving undergraduates.

The criteria invoked to abandon subjects in Queen's include the necessity for a department to achieve a critical staff

mass before it can rate highly in the RAE. It is not, and will never be, possible for some departments in Queen's to achieve this, but that does not mean that Northern Ireland does not need Geology, Italian and Semitic Studies.

Similarly, research in Queen's should not be exclusively concentrated on areas that are going to achieve the highest RAE rating ("international").

Northern Ireland needs the informed skills of locally-based academics for research into our complex problems, which will not always be rated of international standing but the value of which to our communal future can hardly be measured.

Dr JENNIFER FITZGERALD
Senior Lecturer,
The Queen's University of Belfast

"There is no evidence to support the commonly held prejudice that staff who make a substantial contribution to research do so by neglecting their teaching." In saying this, Prof Andrew is clearly unaware of the substantial body of research evidence - admittedly mostly American and Australian - which supports that view.

However, the risk that research-active staff will neglect their students has recently been confirmed by work at Oxford

Brookes University. My question for Prof Andrew is whether the students at Queen's University have been consulted on this issue, and whether they are happy to have an increasing amount of teaching carried out by people whose top-most priority is research?

Dr ROGER BROWN
Principal,
Southampton Institute

Downside of research

My daughter has had first hand experience of the importance placed on research as opposed to students and teaching, while undertaking MA studies in Renaissance Literature at a prestigious London University college.

Throughout this year she has had only one essay marked and both she and her student colleagues have seen their assignments consigned to a box in the faculty office for a semester.

As an enthusiastic and committed student of English Literature who has a deep knowledge and love of her subject, she had hoped to continue on through the academic system and teach. Her experiences of the lack of student support and the emphasis

placed upon research has left her disillusioned, to say the least.

If universities are to have any hope of recruiting committed and caring teaching staff then there have to be other methods of assessment.

Suzanne Ward
Brighton

Internal affairs

Although we should sympathise with Joanna Norris (Your Views, Education, 10 September), whose lecturer husband had an affair with a student, it is irrational to conclude that draconian measures are needed to prevent lecturers from having affairs with their students.

The present Association of University Teachers advice seems sound enough: such relationships should be avoided, but if they happen then steps should be taken to ensure that the student's work is examined by other staff members, and so on.

To call for more American-style policies shows ignorance of the range of motives, circumstances and consequences of such affairs. Of course, there are a few lecherous egomaniacs who serially seduce students, but there can also be sincere romantic attachments. Lectur-

ers may abuse power; but so may students. Yes, marriages can be damaged by such affairs, but then again, they can occasionally be made by them.

I don't deny that, generally, it is immature and unprofessional for academics to behave in this way. But we should not let the reality of exploitation lead to crude caricatures of these situations, or to over-zealous disciplinary procedures.

Piers Benn
Lecturer, School of Philosophy
University of Leeds

Stricter marking?

Tony Mooney's problem (EDUCATION, 3 September) has nothing to do with the introduction of the modular system but is instead caused by the fact that teachers assess the laboratory work in some A-level science courses and this assessed mark contributes 20 per cent to the final A-level grade. But at the same time league tables of school results are published so that there is immense pressure on the science teachers to get the best results.

I am not suggesting that science teachers would do anything as crude as marking something right that is wrong, but there are many subtle ways of indicating what is coming up for assessment, eg by doing something very similar the previous week.

Nationwide, students do brilliantly on assessed coursework, far better than on the corresponding theory papers or practical exam; so perhaps the exam boards are just trying to correct for this inflation. After all they have been criticised for letting standards slip.

John Baker
Hove,
East Sussex

No war zone

The title of Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer's article, "How parents can learn to talk to the enemy" (EDUCATION, 3 September) gives the impression of a state of war in the schools between teachers and parents. The article depicts teachers as not only unhelpful, but also aggressive and negative towards parents.

Of course, it is true that a small minority of teachers will exhibit these characteristics, as one would expect in any large employment group. However, the majority of teachers, in my experience, are genuinely interested in their pupils and give considerable time to liaising with parents in a positive and caring way.

Mrs Hartley-Brewer's somewhat patronising suggestions about how to improve relationships between teachers and parents are likely to be applicable to only a small number of teachers. To tar all teachers with the same brush will have thoroughly depressed them, particularly as many of them will have been returning to their first days teaching in a new academic year.

The article is offensive and divisive and will serve only to make an already extremely difficult job even more so.

John Sherrington
Truro,
Cornwall

Please send your letters to Wendy Berliner, Editor, Education +, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5DL. Include a daytime telephone number. Fax letters to Education + on 0171-293 2451; e-mail edu@independent.co.uk. Letters may be edited.

PASSED/FAILED

ED STOURTON, BBC REPORTER



Ed Stourton, 40, presents the One O'Clock News on BBC1. He has been the Washington correspondent and diplomatic editor of ITN and presented Call Ed Stourton for Radio 4. Faith in the Frontline, his R4 series on Catholicism which begins with Father Charlie Brown of the Vatican ideological police, runs from Monday to Friday, from next week. Absolute Truth, the title of his BBC2 four-partner and also the book of the series, starts on 27 September.

Not a sausage?

At eight, I was sent to Avisford in Sussex, a family-run Catholic prep school where the headmaster had 11 children. It was - for a certain type of outgoing, self-confident boy - a garden of Eden. My chief memories of those years are of hazy summer fields seen from the top of a tree. At the age of 12 I found a half-eaten sausage in the holy-water stoup of the chapel. My fellow prefects and I went about our search for the culprit with a grim determination, we all knew that we were in the presence of evil!

Ed start?

At 12 I was rather large and the headmaster said, "Go to Ampleforth" (the Benedictine monastery and public school in a North Yorkshire valley). I left a term early and got a minor scholarship to Ampleforth.

Scouting along to vespers? I remember looking at my house and thinking it

was huge - and that it was the whole school. The emblem of the school was "The Grid". The monastery was the abbey of St Lawrence, who was barbecued and who said: "Turn me over." The Grid was what he was grilled on; we had a bit of his charred arm in the abbey church. The Grid was the school magazine; I was one of the team of editors. Much of the teaching was done by monks. It was religion with a light touch - it was taken seriously but they were not grim about it. You could go to vespers: monks chanting, which now gets the top of the charts.

Chinese torture?

Trinity College, Cambridge, gave me a place on the strength of my four A-levels

and then I got an exhibition. I had done Mandarin O-level and when I went for

the interview, I hadn't decided whether to read Chinese or English. The don who taught Mandarin was incredibly fierce: "You will spend all afternoons with headphones on in the language laboratory! You will do nothing else!" The English don was kind and said, "See you in September". Then I decided: I read English.

Union dues?
After the first-year exams, my director of studies took me for a walk in the Fellows Garden and said, "There is a chance you could get a first but you'd have to do nothing else - and then you might not get it." I became president of Cambridge Union. I'd done a certain amount of speaking at school, when I was on the Ampleforth debating team that won the Observer mace.

MIS MA?
I got a 2:1. The kind English don who interviewed me may have been connected to the security services because, after going down, several of us taught by him got letters from an illegible signature somewhere in Whitehall - MI5 or MI6, clearly the spies: "It has been suggested that you might be interested in a post in the field of foreign affairs not covered by the usual diplomatic entry procedures." I replied, "Thank you very much but I've got a job at ITN." They wrote back saying, "Let us know if you change your mind before you're 27." Why 27, I don't know.

JONATHAN SALE

A-Z OF UNIVERSITIES

ULSTER



Age: Thirty, if you count from when the New University of Ulster was born in 1988, or 14, from its merger with Ulster Poly.

History: Origins date from Magee College in Londonderry founded by a local philanthropist in 1865. Other constituent parts were taken on later: the Belfast campus came into being when the art college was gobbed up by Ulster Poly in 1971. Jordanstown was formerly the campus of Ulster Poly.

Address: Four different sites spread out over Northern Ireland - up to 80 miles apart.

Ambience: Depends on campus. Belfast, housing art and design, is the smallest site. Derry site is attractive, just north of the walled city. Coleraine, the university's HQ, is a small, quiet market town a few miles from lovely Antrim coast with countryside all around. Jordanstown is the largest site and still expanding. Situated on the hills above Belfast, it has good views over the Lough.

Vital statistics: More than 21,000 students make it the biggest university in Ireland.

Added value: Links with further education colleges make for accessibility. And the university is about to announce a revolutionary new credit transfer system.

Easy to get into? For optometry you need AAB at A-level; for geography CDD; for engineering BCC.

Glittering alumni: Labour MP Kate Hoey; Gerry Anderson, radio presenter; Brian Friel, Eurovision songwriter; Brian Keenan, ex-hostage; Brian Robinson, Irish rugby player. **Transport links:** Trains

for land and property management, and communications and media; 22 for theatre studies and American studies.

Research: Came 55 out of 101 in the assessment exercise. Achieved tip-top 5* in biomedical sciences and a 5 in history.

Financial health: In red for the last three years, according to Noble's Higher Education Financial Yearbook. In 1996-97, the latest year for which figures are available, it was overdrawn by more than £3.5m. Ulster disagrees.

Nightlife: Plenty of pubs in Derry. Social life for Coleraine students is in the seaside town where they live. Jordanstone has three bars and its Assembly Hall.

Cheap to live in? Yes. Three-bed council house to rent for £240 per week. Single room in hall costs £34.16 a week. Private furnished lets are around £300 a month for a three-bed house or flat.

Buzzword: What about ye? (How're you doing?)
Next week: UMIST

LUCY HODGES

A PhD just isn't enough

Career management is now a vital skill for postgraduate students.

By Stephen Pritchard

Graduates in science and engineering who stay on at university to take a research degree face an intellectual challenge, but also a fragmented and confusing job market. For a bright scientist or engineer, a doctorate is a respectable career move which opens the door to a career as an academic, or in research in industry. But even though grants are easier to come by than in the arts and humanities, the cost of further study, not least the loss of earnings from foregoing a graduate salary, is putting students off in fields where they can command impressive pay cheques.

Heads of departments in fields such as computer sciences and chemical engineering say postgraduate places are hard to fill, as good graduates can command salaries of £20,000 or more in the private sector. By contrast, the best-paid studentship is unlikely to be more than half that sum. "These people could be offered between £16,000 and £20,000 to start are being asked to stay on at university on less than £10,000," confirms Professor P J Hegg, head of the chemical engineering department at UMIST. "These people have to be very dedicated."

The picture, though, is different in other parts of science. Biological and life sciences have low starting salaries, fewer commercial jobs, and more intense competition for postgraduate places.

Nor is money the only factor. In pure or fundamental science, a PhD will be the prerequisite for promotion in many jobs, even outside the university sector. In engineering, it is less relevant.

"Life sciences are different from phys-

ical sciences and engineering is different again," explains Mike Gavin, careers adviser at Cambridge University.

The difficulty for graduates embarking on a higher degree in any discipline is that there is no guarantee at all of work at the end of the process. The supply of PhD places is not tied to any quota of academic appointments, post-doctoral research posts, or jobs in industry. Instead, the limiting factor is in the pockets of the research councils, which fund the state studentship scheme, or of students themselves.

More PhD graduates are going on to careers in commercial research and in business generally, helped by the training in transferable skills such as communications, presentations and IT which most doctoral students now receive. Academia is still the prime choice of many, though, and even a PhD is often not enough to obtain a lecturer's job. Instead, a period of between one and three years as a postdoctoral research fellow is the normal next stage.

"The availability of lecturerships is not high, so even if you do a PhD, and follow it with a research fellowship, you would not be guaranteed a job in research. But you would have to be qualified to be offered one," Mike Gavin explains.

At each stage in the research career ladder, from first degree to permanent university appointment, the number of applicants falls off – but so does the number of vacancies. Broadly, according to universities, the system is in balance, until the newly qualified researchers complete their post-doctoral work.

Then, their age and experience, which should be an advantage, can go against them. Most postdoctoral work is funded by

the research councils, which have to justify spending larger sums on salaries for better-qualified researchers. Doing so would mean fewer awards all round, so experienced candidates find themselves priced out of the market.

According to Professor Bill Wakeham, pro-rector for research and development at Imperial College London, there are enough initial postdoctoral posts to satisfy most applicants, if they are prepared to move around, either within the UK uni-

versity system, or to Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

"The crunch comes after three years," Professor Wakeham explains. "No university can afford many people purely doing research, so they are on short term contracts from universities or research councils. But as they get older, they become more expensive, so finding money to fund them becomes more difficult."

One initiative designed to help is the Concordat for research staff, drawn up be-

tween the research councils, the unions and the universities. The idea behind the Concordat is to give university staff whose primary work is in research, rather than teaching, a properly managed career path.

The Concordat has brought improvements in training and careers advice, but it has done little to address the shortage of academic appointments in general, and pure research posts in particular.

This does not mean that researchers in science and engineering cannot find re-

warding work. Trends including the teaching pressures on lecturers, and the growing importance of inter-disciplinary study, which can often only be handled by people with the experience and knowledge a PhD brings, are widening the field.

For the ambitious scientist, though, the facts are that there may be the jobs, but there are not as many careers. For new PhD students, career management will rank alongside research techniques in the skills they will have to develop.

Postgraduate research in the physical sciences opens doors but there are pitfalls

John Lawrence

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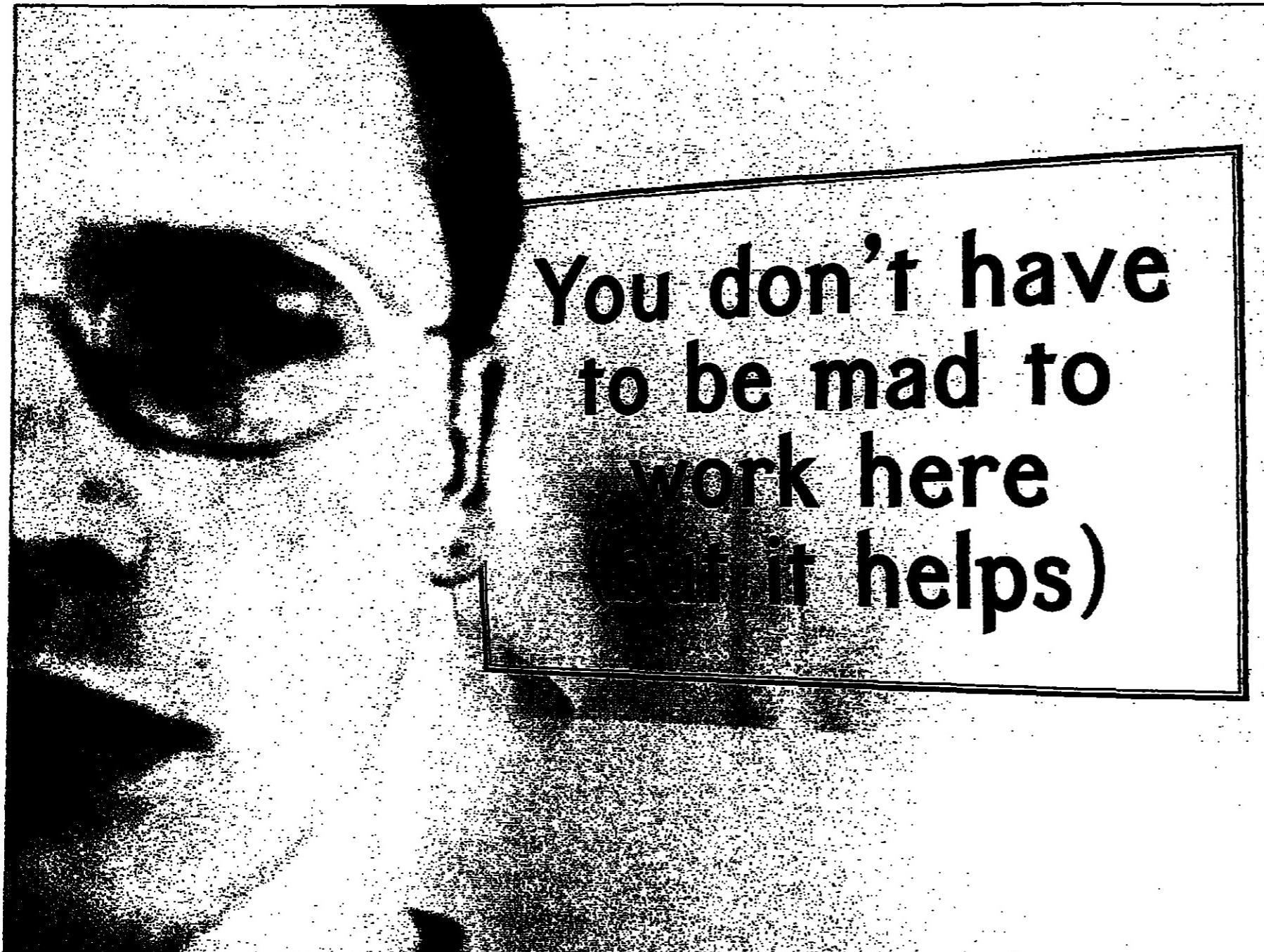
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City of Westminster

FAST TRACK

GRADUATING TO THE WORLD OF WORK



The only explanation for the spread of such witticisms is that they satisfy some kind of need in the worker's psyche

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS JOHNSON MATTHEY

Age: 181 "and still going strong".

History: The grandly-named Percival Norton Johnson, an assayer and gold refiner, established his business in London's Hatton Garden in 1817, but it was not until 34 years later that he formed a partnership with George Matthey. In 1851, the business became a limited company; nearly a century on, it turned into a plc. Johnson Matthey's reputation is established in technology for precious metals and materials; it pioneered industrial application of platinum group metals, used in fields as diverse as air pollution control and anti-cancer treatments. Other uses are in manufacture of fine chemicals and the generation of clean energy in fuel cells.

Address: Head office is in London, just off Trafalgar Square, but the company is multinational and operates in 38 countries. It also has 17 sites in the UK, and a sponsored programme in the United States.

Ambience: While the company is global, individuals are easily "noticed", says a spokesman. There is a decentralised structure, with four operating divisions (precious metals, catalytic systems, electronic materials and ceramic materials), with a company-wide policy of open communication and team spirit. Innovation and the Japanese "kaizen" theory (continuous improvement) are also part of the corporate culture. Employees, claims a spokesman, "tend to stay with the company for many years".

The Corporate Research Foundation reports that the company is characterised by fast decision-making and local responsibility, together with a reputation for integrity. "The Johnson Matthey of today is much less bureaucratic, and a lot slicker and faster."

Facilities: Most offices have canteens; sports and social clubs – including five-a-side football teams – are based at different sites.

Glimmering alumni: None to speak of, although three board members have clocked up nearly 100 years of service between them.

Pay: Salaries are reputedly competitive, and progression is performance-linked.

Training: An intensive business training programme consists of a series of two-day modules for graduate recruits, while there is also on-the-job training. Fast-track middle managers can join a management development programme, and senior managers may end up on a course at INSEAD or Harvard.

Who's the boss? Chris Clark is chief executive, having joined in 1982 and progressed through running all the company's sectors.

RACHELLE THACKRAY



Johnson Matthey: 12,600 employees worldwide

Think you're funny? Tell it to the boss

Developing a sense of humour to go with your job can be a funny old thing. By Jenny Madden

THERE'S AN *Alas Smith and Jones* sketch from many years ago which goes something like this: Socrates is sitting at the bar of a pub in ancient Greece dispensing nuggets of philosophical wisdom to the uninterested barman when another customer walks up. While buying a drink, he comments: "You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps!" Upon this, the bar manager looks greatly excited and exclaims: "That's the best thing I've ever heard. I'll write it down and put it up behind the bar!" (Much to poor Socrates' disgust.)

Humorous notices of the "You don't have to be mad to work here" type are an institution. Visit shops, offices, pubs and restaurants across the country and you'll find them nestling among the other notices on the wall or pinned to a computer or till. While these are often crude, handwritten copies of signs someone has seen or photocopies of an original, the only explanation for the spread of such witticisms is that they satisfy some kind of need in the worker's psyche.

Some workplaces make a point of humour. Soh-hang-out! The Dive Bar is covered in such placards. Some of the reminders to staff read: "Tell me again how lucky I am to work here, I keep forgetting"; "Stu-

pid mistakes are always made by others, we only make unavoidable errors"; and "In case of atomic attack, keep calm, don't panic, run like hell and pay your bill".

Bar manager Mike Cowell says the wife of the boss has been adding slogans to the bar for many years. "She's been collecting them since the early Eighties," he says. And does she really find them funny, or is this some kind of kitsch statement? Mr Cowell says it's not meant to be kitsch: "She finds these things genuinely funny, not naff."

While The Dive Bar may have turned into something of a shrine to this kind of humour, the most common place you'll find the humorous poster or placard lurking is in the reception areas, typing pools and kitchens of offices across Britain. There, they exist to brighten up the dull moments, even when the joke has long since ceased to be funny.

So who makes these things, and are they still in mass production? Lindsey Parsons, at Southampton-based giftware manufacturers Russberry, remembers that when the company started up in the Sixties, humorous placards were all the rage. But she says they haven't included them in the range for many years: these days, it seems, office hu-

mour has grown up – in Britain, at least. "There's just not the demand for that sort of thing any more: it's too American for the British sense of humour," she claims.

Ms Parsons does appear to have a point. Some would argue that British humour is renowned for cringe-

Office humour functions like the material of comedian Brian Conley – more of a comfort valve than an attempt to induce mirth

rely and insight, and for the unique flavour of its dark comedy. According to this line of thinking, the only place a "You don't have to be mad to work here but it helps!" notice would summon a laugh would be hanging in the offices of an organisation such as MIND, which employs some staff who have suffered from mental illness.

But in most other locations, these notices are considered old-fashioned and jokey. Office humour functions in the same way as the material of a comedian like Brian Conley: it's more of a comfort valve than a proactive attempt to induce mirth, but it nevertheless still finds a place in some people's hearts.

The easy accessibility of the office photocopier probably explains why once one office humour poster has got into the office, it can spread throughout, bored staff pasting legends into every corner, such as "Our boss is always right; misinformed perhaps, sloppy, crude, bullheaded, bad-tempered, fickle and even stupid, but never wrong" and "Rule No.1: The boss is always right. Rule No.2: If the boss is wrong see No.1".

Oddly enough, while these dig at the boss might be considered risqué, it's often the boss who introduces the office humour into the workplace first. Could this attempt at giving the staff packaged and controlled weapons of protest be aimed at stopping them from actually talking back or complaining? This is the theory of Ben Spieman, the ad sales manager on a London legal magazine, who recently grew so weary of his boss's ardour for collecting and pinning up office humour posters

that he led an insurrection by encouraging fellow workers to illustrate "You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps" placards with their own interpretations of madness. "Office humour is just a purchasable dissent; an accepted outlet for dissatisfaction. It's as oppressive a part of the office as fluorescent lighting," Spieman explains.

It is a well-known truism that the British find it difficult to complain. Perhaps office humour's success is down to the way it provides a means of articulating our resentment at work but in a non-confrontational and ultimately ineffective manner. Brits are often happier to make jokes in the "mustn't grumble" vein than they are to confront their superiors and voice dissatisfaction. Office humour is like the modern-day office spirit – meant to keep you smiling through, no matter what the problem is.

And that's why office humour is here to stay. In the days where almost everyone has access to photocopiers, fax and now e-mail, office humour has taken on a life of its own. It may not be purchased in the quantity it once was, but it will exist and multiply as long as there is a bored, mischievous little devil in every office.

I don't want to give in to these bullying tactics

HELP DESK

YOUR CAREER PROBLEMS SOLVED

Dear Help Desk:
SOME TIME ago I agreed redundancy terms with my boss after eight years with the same company. The agreement was that if I worked for a further six-month period I would get certain benefits. This was confirmed in writing. Now the period is over and my boss is saying that, since I have had time to get another position, he has reduced the amount to be paid. My attempts to argue my case for what was agreed have only resulted in several bitter rows. He has told me that if I fight his decision not only will he withdraw his reduced offer but he will also make it difficult for me to get another job. I have a week to agree or face the consequences. I am not sleeping due to

anxiety about this situation and, at 50 years old, I am finding getting another job very hard. My wife thinks I should accept what I am offered and go without making a fuss. What would be your advice?

George N

Phillip Wood, head of Employment Unit, Maxwell Bradley Solicitors, says: Your boss is misguidedly relying upon an established legal principle, and that following his breach of the agreement it is up to you to mitigate your loss. If you fail to do so to a reasonable extent, any compensation which a court awards you could be reduced to reflect that failure. That duty to mitigate only arises.

however, once the breach has occurred. You will not be penalised for failing to look for or find another job during the final six months of your employment. You have two choices. You could refuse the reduced amount and sue your employer for the original agreed amount, or accept the reduced amount now and then sue for the balance on the basis that you only did so under duress. Given your employer's threats (which could constitute blackmail), it may be better to pursue the latter course once you have found and started another job.

Nick Shannon, occupational psychologist, Acker Deboeck & Company, says:

Your boss is playing it tough in the hope that you will go quietly for less money than was agreed. He is pressuring you to accept his revised offer by imposing a time limit and threatening to make it difficult for you to find another job. However you have the upper hand as you have written evidence of the original agreement. What your boss is doing is not only unethical, it is illegal. Why is your boss attempting to do this to you? Perhaps his own situation is not se-

cure and he thinks that by saving some money on your redundancy he will establish some credit. You can turn the tables and avoid the unpleasantness of confronting him again by referring the matter upwards. Set out your situation clearly in a letter to your boss's superior, enclosing a copy of the original terms that were agreed, with a copy to your boss. Insist that the company stick to what was agreed, and ask for a prompt resolution. In the meantime you might contact your solicitor to find out what the legal proceedings are should it become necessary.

Andrew Marshall, agony uncle and president of the British Men's Counselling Association, says:

Some people relish a fight, finding it brings out the best in them, while others feel ground down and depressed. It sounds like you belong in the second camp, and if you are not sleeping now, how will you feel if this dispute takes 18 months to grind through the courts? I was in the same situation where I was made redundant and not being offered what my contract stipulated. Believing that each of us has only so much emotional energy, I thought I would do better using mine to look to the future. It is an old cliché, but as one door closes another opens; I decided I could not move on if the

old door was left ajar by litigation. So I asked a lawyer friend to negotiate on my behalf. He significantly improved the offer and I was able to leave with my dignity intact. The crisis made me reassess my working life and I have changed direction into something far more personally rewarding. Good luck at turning your problem into an opportunity.

Compiled by Carmen Fielding

If you have a work problem and want expert advice, write to Carmen Fielding, Fast Track Features, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL; fax 0171-293 2451; e-mail fielding@independent.co.uk

Stephen W

Danger: you've got a job

Violence in the workplace is on the increase, and one of the highest risk areas is the retail industry – especially for graduates. By Kate Hilpern

Most of us are au fait with the dangers of violence on the streets and even in the home. If there aren't dark alleys and dodgy cab drivers to worry about, there are aggressive partners. What we are rarely warned about, however, is the increasing risk of brutality in the workplace. After all, employers will always take steps to protect you, won't they? If not, surely a colleague would shield you?

Don't be so sure. According to the Health and Safety Executive, there has been a significant increase in the number of violent attacks by colleagues and clients in the workplace, and not just in the most obviously dangerous jobs. Schools and libraries, for instance, are higher risk environments than ever before. And according to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust – named after the young estate agent who disappeared without a trace in the course of her work – more and more market researchers and social workers have to cope with being threatened with dogs or being punched and spat at.

Meanwhile, staff from housing departments have the odd kitchen sink or toilet hurled at them. One was even held hostage by two 65-year-olds. And while the British Crime Survey does not have a specific category for workplace violence, it does note "acquaintance violence" which accounts for about half of all attacks on men and one third of all attacks on women. A staggering 23 per cent of these incidents involve a customer or client, and around 20 per cent occur at work.

Retailing has become a particularly prominent danger area in the late Nineties. The British Retail Consortium's crime survey reported that this year, violent incidents against retail staff had increased by 44 per cent to 13,000. Nathan Flatman remembers his experience as a new graduate last year. "I was employed as a supervisor of the toy department in a major store and at Christmas, it was not unusual for customers to get very irate when we didn't stock the things they wanted. Because we were their last line of attack, they could get very aggressive and they sometimes even resorted to pushing us around."

Indeed, claims Flatman – who now works for the Suzy Lamplugh Trust – just as retailing is high risk in terms of a working environment, graduates are high risk in terms of becoming victims. "Generally, graduates are still a bit under-confident in the workplace and have not learnt that sometimes it is better to refuse to get into certain situations than just trying to please the boss."

In addition, maintains the Trust, graduates are used to working individually at university. The result? They are less likely to attempt to decrease the risk of violence by asking to work as part of a team. "Graduates working in financial services, marketing or sales, for instance, are likely to visit clients in their homes alone, even if they feel vulnerable."

The fact that in the Nineties the customer is king is also relevant, says Cary Cooper, Professor of Organisational Psychology at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. "In an insecure working climate, fresh graduates become afraid to stand up for their rights. They are so aware of the Patient's Charter and consumer rights that some of them actually set themselves up to be abused."

To top it all, claims Cooper, employers are not doing enough about it. Flatman agrees. There are five main pieces of legislation relevant to violence at work, he says, ranging from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. "Yet like many graduate drivers, the skill of personal safety training for my new job lasted just half an hour."

So what needs to be learned? Sarah Simpson, training director of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, explains:

"At the most basic level, it's essential for employees to leave information with a colleague about where they are and keep in touch if plans are changed. I know it's common sense, but it's truly amazing how many people simply don't do it."

In addition, there are specific

techniques for dealing with another person's anger. "The way you sit, stand and relate to them, as well as what you wear, can have an effect. Hands on the hips, for instance, can be seen as confrontational – as can too much eye contact or moving closer to the person even if it's to put an arm round them." Employees – especially graduates – also need to be aware that their predecessors may have caused the perpetrator to be agitated. A customer could, for example, have been promised something that they never received.

Getting to know the psychology of the angry customer/colleague is vital, according to all training organisations. But the skill of persuading a person to tell you exactly what their problem is, whilst identifying and sympathising with them, comes more naturally to some than others. It is usually women, in fact. "Women are better at talking their way out of precarious situations," says personal safety trainer, Alice Lewis. "This might explain why statistics show that men are currently twice as likely as women to be subject to violent attacks in the workplace. When you consider that

men are far less likely than women to report attacks, the real figure is probably even higher." But, she adds, even near misses need to be recorded. "It's one way of ensuring that the employer will provide more extensive training."

The fact is, however, that even the most sophisticated policies and procedures for safety cannot guarantee that a violent incident will never occur. This is why aftercare – such as critical debriefing or trauma counselling – is as important as training, emphasises counsellor Thelma Williams. "Depression, fear, headaches and flashbacks are typical responses to traumatic experiences. Very often, these responses resolve themselves in a few days, but when sufferers fail to acknowledge their emotions about the event, they can be heightened or prolonged. They may even lead to post-traumatic stress disorder."

In fact, it is unusual for such events to trigger off other issues.

Williams remembers one woman whose experience of violence at work jolted her memory back to when she was raped some years earlier. "This can happen to witnesses,

too. The word 'trauma' comes from the Greek meaning 'wound'. It doesn't have to mean a wound to the body but to the psyche."

So do most organisations offer aftercare? Unfortunately, they do not.

"Counselling still gets a bad press in this country," explains Professor Cary Cooper. "People are quick to say, 'If it's so essential, how come we coped without it 30 years ago?' But 30 years ago, we had extended families and close-knit communities who acted as natural counsellors. Today, society is too polarised for that." Sarah Simpson claims that one day she would like to run a programme focusing on workplace bullying.

"We all read articles like this about violence and harassment and identify with the victims. But we're all capable of becoming irrational, angry and aggressive ourselves. Just look at the way most people treat traffic wardens. For a happy working environment, employees need to beware of finding themselves on either side of the equation."

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, 0181-876 0305, or www.suzylamplugh.org



Nathan Flatman, 'pushed around' by irate customers when he was taken on as a toy department supervisor Nicola Kurtz

Up to their eyes in debt

Graduates are struggling to clear their student overdrafts. By Kate Hilpern

ACCORDING TO a recent survey by Barclays Bank, 86 per cent of students think they will be in debt at the end of their course. Pretty high, you might think, but many would be surprised it is not higher.

After all, the average student graduating this year can expect to owe almost £4,000. That is around five times the figure from 10 years ago. In the last year alone, there has been a 30 per cent rise in the amount owed to the student loan scheme, and over the last five years, money borrowed from the scheme has risen from under £100m to £700m. So do these enormous sums mean graduates are five times as worried about debt as they were a decade ago?

Apparently not. Graduates are less troubled about their debts and less efficient at repaying them than ever. Barclays' survey claims: "As awareness of debt is increasing, students are becoming more resigned about their lack of money. The number of students who are worried, angry or concerned about their debts has fallen by 9 per cent over the last year to 30 per cent and 21 per cent since 1992." Professor Stephen Lea, economic psychologist at the University of Exeter, agrees: "Today's stu-

dents don't share the same hostility towards debt as the rest of the population. Even their hierarchy of repayment surprises some people. At the bottom of the list are student loans – which often form the biggest debt – yet they are usually not considered as debt at all but merely as credit. Then there are bank overdrafts which start off creating resentment in the first year but,

'Today's students don't share the same hostility towards debt as the rest of the population'

students tend to manage their money more cautiously than men, with smaller debts," says Dr Alan Lewis, economic psychologist at the University of Bath. "Men, on the other hand, often blow large amounts in the pub and are much less likely than women to do proper accounting while at university."

Julian Goode, 27, graduated in 1995 with more than £7,500 of debt. "I was living in cloud cuckoo land about my salary expectations. Now my credit card bills are really starting to get to me. At least I can put off"

the student loan because my salary is low enough that I can keep deferring repayment." This will not be the case for long, however, for the threshold is getting lower. Currently, graduates can defer repayment if they earn under 85 per cent of national average earnings, but soon, students earning more than £10,000 a year will have to start repaying.

When the debt collectors caught up with Suzy Asquith, 27, she left her career. "I had a good job in the media but it didn't pay well. It would have done once I'd worked my way up but I left and went into sales where the money was good enough to start paying back what I owed. But that was a year ago and I'm still having difficulty even getting back into media. I wish I had started paying my debts back earlier. Then I wouldn't be in this awful position."

Naomi Atkinson, a financial adviser, is not surprised. "If graduates know they can get rid of their debt within a very short period of time, they might consider getting it out of the way. But if a single repayment is nothing but a drop in the ocean, they think, why should I bother? Second, the

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Legal Notices

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR NEW JUSTICES LICENCE

ON THE 11TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1998

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 96 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above-named Company will be held at Coket Hall, Bonsall Road, Wigan, WN1 2LP on the 13th day of October 1998 at 12 noon for the purpose mentioned in Section 99 or 101 of the said Act.

Notice of the name and address of the Company's Creditors may be inspected free of charge between 10.00am and 4.00pm at the office of the Company at Coket Hall, Bonsall Road, Wigan, WN1 2LP on the 12th day of October 1998.

Notice of the date and time of the meeting of the creditors will be given by notice sent to the Company's Creditors at the address mentioned in Section 99 or 101 of the said Act.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 96 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above-named Company will be held at 10.00am on the 13th day of October 1998 at the Old Bakery, Lower Cover Road, Royton, Huddersfield, S65 5EA at 10.00 am for the purpose mentioned in Section 99 or 101 of the said Act.

Notice of the date and time of the meeting of the creditors will be given by notice sent to the Company's Creditors at the address mentioned in Section 99 or 101 of the said Act.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 96 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above-named Company will be held at 10.00am on the 13th day of October 1998 at The Old Bakery, Lower Cover Road, Royton, Huddersfield, S65 5EA at 10.00 am for the purpose mentioned in Section 99 or 101 of the said Act.

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NEW FILMS

BABYMOTHER (16)

Director: Julian Henriques
Starring: Anita Lauren Smith, Will Johnson, Caroline Chikizie
An endearing reggae musical which takes an old idea and dresses it in gaudy colours - quite literally, in fact, given that it sometimes looks as though the print has been spattered with Day-Glo paint. Anita (Anita Lauren Smith) is a "babymother" - a woman saddled with children at a young age. She lives in north London and longs not only by her responsibility to her son and daughter, but by their calculating father, who feels that his own imminent stardom would be jeopardised by Anita's success. The final musical showdown between the pair is clumsy, but for the most part, this is a fresh and engaging delight.

West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero

COUSIN BETTE (15)

Director: Des McAnuff
Starring: Jessica Lange, Elisabeth Shue, Bob Hoskins
Balzac's novel about romance and deception in 19th-century France is the basis for this shallow but breezy comedy. Jessica Lange plays Bette, who is appointed housekeeper to the family of her late cousin. In the pursuit of love in her own life, she inadvertently weaves a web of betrayal around everyone she knows - her cousin's daughter; Hortense (Kelly McDonald), her actress friend Jenny (Elisabeth Shue), and most of all Wenceslaus (Aidan Young), a sculptor to whom Bette has designed to play benefactor. Although the Director Des McAnuff can't keep his film from wandering, there are enough precious comic moments to make it a pleasing diversion.

West End: ABC Baker Street, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)

Director: Steven Spielberg
Starring: Tom Hanks, Edward Burns, Matt Damon
Steven Spielberg's Second World War drama focuses on a mission with more than a hint of

public relations about it. Three brothers are killed in action, and their mother is about to receive the triple-dose of bad news in one go; the fourth and youngest, James Ryan, is still in combat. Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) is dispatched with his squad to seek out the young Private behind enemy lines and return him home to safety. It is unlikely that many viewers will emerge from the picture warmed by emotional catharsis, though there is plenty of it in evidence. It is the harsh, devastating battle sequences which are branded on the memory, and which momentarily suggest that the film will be something more adventurous and resonant than your average war movie. It isn't. But the promise alone is, in itself, strangely compelling.

The real achievement of *Saving Private Ryan* is that Spielberg has managed to create anything remotely worthwhile out of Robert Rodat's screenplay. Rodat throws together so many clichés that at times it seems that most of Spielberg's energy is expended in distracting us from the tawdriness of the material. This he does most effectively in the combat scenes, where subjective sound and photography create a disturbing sense of chaos. It was an error to once again use John Williams as composer, but for most of these lapses of judgement there are compensations, most often found in the cast.

West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

LA VIE DE JESUS (THE LIFE OF JESUS) (NC)

Director: Bruno Dumont
Starring: David Douche, Marjorie Cottrell, Geneviève Cottrell, Kader Chabout
See *The Independent Recommends*, right

ICA Cinema

Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

ARMAGEDDON (12)

This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie in which a meteor is on a collision course with Earth. Its jumble of styles will end up pleasing no one. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE AVENGERS (12)

Ralph Fiennes dons the bowler hat and wields the cane as Steel, Uma Thurman pours herself into a caftan as Emma Peel, while Sean Connery sashays around in a kit as August De Winter, who plans to take over the world by controlling the weather. West End: Warner Village West End

LE BOSSU (15)

Sumptuous swashbucklers are fast becoming French cinema's stock-in-trade. This effort doesn't break much new ground, but is acted and shot with such magnificent bravado that its lack of originality is never a problem. West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Mayfair

THE DAYTRIPPERS (15)

Worried that her publisher husband may be having an affair, Eliza (Hope Davis) confides in her parents, only to find that the whole family insists on accompanying her to Manhattan for the day to confront him. First-time writer-director Motola charts the tensions of the family car journey with unerring wit and unexpected compassion.

West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Swiss Centre

DR DOLITTLE (PG)

The thought of Eddie Murphy functioning within the restrictions of a PG certificate may not be a promising one, but Dr Dolittle proves that his talents are surprisingly pliable.

West End: Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

EVE'S BAYOU (15)

Rites-of-passage drama set in Louisiana locations which have been devoured by too many Southern comfort ads. With Samuel L Jackson, Lynn Whitfield and Debbi Morgan. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Virgin Trocadero

HANA-BI (18)

Director-star Kitano picked up the Golden Lion at last year's Venice Film Festival with this violent yet elegant portrait of a brutal Japanese policeman pushed over the edge by his traumatic personal life. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

HANDS (AKA PALMS) (PG)

The director of this harrowing semi-documentary has been compared to Pasolini and Tarkovsky, but though this is an imaginatively realised rumination on the workings of the modern world, the picture is deadening in a way that those directors' best work never was. West End: Renoir

HE GOT GAME (18)

The plot of Spike Lee's muddled tale is pure poppycock: Jake Shuttlesworth (Denzel Washington) is doing time for the murder of his wife, but is offered a deal which could cut short his sentence if he can persuade his basketball star son to sign up with the Governor's alma mater. Lee coaxes an impressive performance from Washington, but it is his own stylistic excesses which are the film's undoing. West End: Odeon Kensington, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

THE HORSE WHISPERER (PG)

Robert Redford's film of Nicholas Evans's novel is a textbook lesson in the narcissistic allure of cinema. Redford plays a Montana farmer who specialises in equine psychology. He agrees to help magazine editor Kristin Scott Thomas whose daughter has been traumatised Thomas whose daughter has been traumatised

in a riding accident. West End: Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

THE LAND GIRLS (12)

Rachel Weisz, Anna Friel and Catherine McCormack are the "land girls" called upon in the Second World War to pick up the discarded ploughs and take the place of the farmers who have departed for war. Nothing surprising here - sexual awakening, broad laughs, a smattering of tragedy - but very nicely done. West End: Screen On The Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (15)

In the fictional club at the centre of Whit Stillman's dry and slightly sad comedy, everything sparkles - under the light from the glitterball, the dancers are united in their absent-minded beauty. Stillman does a fine job of capturing the mixture of flair, invigoration and uncertainty by which any burgeoning trend is characterised and it's refreshing to find a work that is this enchanting and intelligent. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Richmond Picture House, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

LIVE FLESH (18)

Pedro Almodóvar's most accomplished film to date is crammed with sexual symbolism so potent it leaves you reeling.

West End: ABC Piccadilly

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

This picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high stakes card-game, falls into the former; but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes £500,000, a dangerous old-school pro. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

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LOST IN SPACE (PG)

Yet another cult 1960s TV series to get an expensive makeover, but the film-makers have remained faithful to the original tone and the movie looks terrific. West End: Odeon West End

THE REAL HOWARD SPITZ (PG)

The Real Howard Spitz, a sunny comedy about a children's writer (Kelsey Grammer, aka Frasier) who hates children, is director Vadim Jean's most likeable work. Originality may be thin on the ground, but the direction is breezy and Grammer has a lovely, grumpy demeanour.

West End: UCI Whiteleys

THE SPANISH PRISONER (PG)

David Mamet's intricate thriller is a playful exercise in twisting a plot until it locks; there is a scientific detachment about the way he explores every permutation but the movie is also silly

ly West End: Empire Leicester Square, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

SPECIES II (18)

Ludicrous science-fiction horror about a strand of alien DNA carried back to Earth in the bodies of astronauts. West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

THE WEDDING SINGER (12)

A shamelessly dumb but very winning comedy starring Adam Sandler as the eponymous crooner and Drew Barrymore as the waitress he falls for. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Warner Village West End

THE X-FILES (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

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in a riding accident. West End: Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

West End: Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

West End: Curzon Cinema

THE X-FILES (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

West End: Curzon Cinema

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West End: Curzon Cinema

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West End: Curzon Cinema

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See *The Independent Recommends*, above West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

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West End: Curzon Cinema

THE X-FILES (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

West End: Curzon Cinema

ELFORD
ODEON (0181-315 4223) ♦ Gants Hill Dr Doltite 11.30pm, 1.50pm, 3.40pm Lethal Weapon 4 6pm, 8.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 12.50pm, 3.20pm, 6pm, 8.30pm Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil 12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm Saving Private Ryan 12.20pm, 4pm, 7.40pm The X-Files 12.10pm, 2.50pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm

KINGSTON
ABC OPTIONS (0870-9020409)
BR: Kingston, The Horse Whisperer 2.10pm, 7.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.05pm, 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.25pm Saving Private Ryan 12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm

MUSWELL HILL
ODEON (0181-315 4217) ♦ Highgate Dr Doltite 1.05pm, 2.55pm, 4.45pm The Horse Whisperer 12.50pm, 4.10pm, 7.50pm Lethal Weapon 4 6.25pm, 8.50pm Saving Private Ryan 12noon, 3.40pm, 7.40pm

PECKHAM
ODEON (0181-235 3005)
BR: Peckham, Ryde Babymother 2.15pm, 4.15pm, 6.15pm, 8.15pm, 10.15pm Dr Doltite 1.45pm, 8.55pm Godzilla 2.25pm He Got Game 3.20pm, 6.15pm, 9.10pm Lethal Weapon 4 9.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 2.10pm, 4.35pm, 7pm, 9.25pm Saving Private Ryan 1.55pm, 5.20pm, 8.45pm Species II 5.15pm, 7.25pm The X-Files 3.55pm, 6.25pm, 8.55pm

PURLEY
ABC (0870-9020407) BR: Purley The Horse Whisperer 7.20pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 5.40pm, 8.30pm Saving Private Ryan 7.10pm

PUTNEY
ABC (0870 9020401) ♦ Putney Bridge Br: Richmond, The Horse Whisperer 12.45pm, 4.15pm, 7.45pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm Saving Private Ryan 1.45pm, 3.15pm, 8.45pm

RICHMOND
ODEON (0181-315 4218)
BR/♦: Richmond, The Horse Whisperer 1pm, 4.30pm, 8.10pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.30pm Saving Private Ryan 1.10pm, 4.50pm, 8.30pm

ODEON STUDIO (0181-315 4218)
BR/♦: Richmond, Armageddon 5.20pm, 8.30pm Cousin Bette 1.10pm, 3.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm Dr Doltite 1.20pm, 3.20pm The Land Girls 1.10pm, 6.50pm The Spanish Prisoner 3.30pm, 9.20pm The X-Files 2.10pm, 7.10pm, 6.10pm, 9.10pm

ROMFORD
ABC (0870-9020419) BR: Romford, Lethal Weapon 4 8.15pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 5.40pm, 8.30pm Saving Private Ryan 7.30pm

SIDCUP
ABC (061-555131) BR: Sidcup The Horse Whisperer 4.10pm, 7.40pm Saving Private Ryan 4pm, 7.30pm

STAPLES CORNER
VIRGIN (0870-9070717) BR: Cricklewood Dr Doltite 2pm, 4.20pm The Horse Whisperer 2.30pm, 6pm Lethal Weapon 4 6.15pm, 8.15pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm Saving Private Ryan 12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm The X-Files 12.10pm, 2.50pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm

SWANSEA
ABC (061-555131) BR: Swansea The Horse Whisperer 4.10pm, 7.40pm Saving Private Ryan 4pm, 7.30pm

STRATFORD
ODEON (0181-315 4219) BR: Stratford Hill/Brixton/Clympham Common Armageddon 8pm Dr Doltite 2.10pm, 4.10pm, 6pm He Got Game 2.10pm, 5.20pm, 8.10pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm Saving Private Ryan 12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm The X-Files 12.20pm, 3pm, 7.55pm

TURPIN LANE
CORONET (0181-888 2519) ♦ Turnpike Lane, Lethal Weapon 4 6.15pm, 8.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.35pm Saving Private Ryan 1.10pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm The X-Files 12.20pm, 3pm

WATERMANS ARTS CENTRE High Street, Brentford (0181-568 1176) The Land Girls (12) 1.30pm, 6.15pm The Horse Whisperer (PG) 3.30pm, 8.15pm

BRIGHTON
DUKE OF YORK'S (01273-626261) The Scarlet Tunic (12) 2pm Le Bossu (15) 4pm, 8.45pm Self-Made Hero (15) 6.30pm

BRISTOL
WATERSHED (0117-825 3845) Cousin Bette (15) 6pm, 8.25pm Dance Of The Wind (U) 6.05pm The Last Days Of Disco (15) 8.35pm

CAMBRIDGE
ARTS CINEMA (01223-504464) The Horse Whisperer (PG) 4pm, 6.30pm Psycho (15) 4pm, 9.30pm

CARDIFF
CHARTER ARTS CENTRE (01222-599666) The Last Days Of Disco (15) 2.30pm, 7.30pm The General (16) 6.15pm Metroland (18) 8.45pm

IPSWICH
THEATRE (01473-215544) Eve's Bayou (15) 2.30pm Firelight (15) 6.15pm, 8.30pm The Thing (1982 Version) (18) 7.30pm

NORWICH
CINEMA CITY (01603-622047) Afterglow (15) 2.30pm, 5.45pm Hanabi (16) 8.15pm

OXFORD
PHOENIX PICTURE HOUSE (01865-554908) Love And Death On Long Island (15) 1pm The Horse Whisperer (PG) 3pm, 8.30pm Cousin Bette (15) 4.15pm, 9.15pm GoodFellas (18) 9pm

PLYMOUTH
PLYMOUTH ARTS CENTRE (01752-206114) Mojo (18) 5pm

WALTHAMSTOW
ABC (0870-9020424) ♦ Walthamstow Central, Lethal Weapon 4 8.10pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 3pm, 5.30pm, 8.10pm Saving Private Ryan 2.30pm, 7.05pm Species II 2.50pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm

WALTON ON THAMES
THE SCREEN AT WALTON (01932-252825) BR: Walton on Thames The Horse Whisperer 8pm The Land Girls 3.30pm, 6pm Saving Private Ryan 3pm, 7.30pm

WELL HALL
CORONET (0181-850 3351) BR: Eltham Lethal Weapon 4 6.15pm, 8.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 4pm, 6.15pm, 8.30pm

WIMBLEDON
ODEON (0181-315 4222) BR: Wimbledon 4pm South Whiteman Armageddon 8pm Dr Doltite 1.40pm, 3.40pm, 5.40pm, 7.45pm, 9.20pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm, 9.25pm Saving Private Ryan 12.20pm, 3.35pm, 7.30pm, 9.25pm The X-Files 2.50pm

WOOD GREEN
NEXT CURZON (0181-347 6664) ♦ Turnpike Lane, Jay Pyar Kissie Ho/Hai 11pm Piggy To Hona Hi The 5pm

WOODFORD
ABC (0181-989 3463) ♦ South Woodford The Horse Whisperer 12.40pm, 4.05pm, 7.30pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 3pm, 5.30pm, 8.30pm Saving Private Ryan 12.45pm, 4.10pm, 7.30pm

WOOLWICH
CORONET (0181-954 5043) BR: Woolwich Arsenal Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm Saving Private Ryan 1.45pm, 3.15pm, 6.45pm

YORK
ODEON (0181-315 4218) BR/♦: York 1pm, 4.30pm, 8.10pm Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.30pm Saving Private Ryan 1.10pm, 4.50pm, 8.30pm

CINEMA
REPERTORY

THEATRE WEST END

Ticket availability details are for today, times and prices for the week: running times include intervals. Seats at all prices — Seats at some prices O — Returns only Matinees [1] Sun; [3] Tue; [4] Wed; [5] Thu; [6] Fri; [7] Sat

ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS Michael Frayn's new comedy about a dinner party which is interrupted by mysterious messages stars Nellie and John Lawrence. Gielgud Theatre, St Martin's Avenue, WC1 (0171-424 5069) ♦ PicCir Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5][7] 8pm, ends 2 Oct; £19.50-22.70, 165 mins.

ANNA KARENINA Stage adaptation of Tolstoy's classic portrayal of passion from Shared Experience Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith King Street, W6 (0181-741 2311) ♦ Hammersmith Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [7] 2.30pm, ends 10 Oct; £5-E18.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Lewis Carroll's musical based on Disney's cartoon version of the favourite fairytale, Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-656 1888) ♦ Jon Ct Rd Mon-Wed, Sat 7.30pm, Sun 6.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £18.50-£35, 150 mins.

BLOODY BROTHERS Willy Russell's long-running Liverpool musical, Phoenix Theatre, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1736) [cc] 8.30pm, [4] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [5] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [6] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [7] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [8] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [9] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [10] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [11] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [12] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [13] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [14] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [15] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [16] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [17] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [18] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [19] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [20] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [21] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [22] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [23] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [24] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [25] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [26] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [27] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [28] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [29] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [30] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [31] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [32] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [33] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [34] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [35] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [36] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [37] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [38] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [39] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [40] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [41] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [42] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [43] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [44] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [45] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [46] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [47] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [48] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [49] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [50] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [51] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [52] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [53] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [54] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [55] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [56] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [57] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [58] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [59] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [60] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [61] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [62] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [63] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [64] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [65] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [66] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [67] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [68] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [69] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [70] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [71] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [72] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [73] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [74] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [75] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [76] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [77] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [78] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [79] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [80] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [81] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [82] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [83] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [84] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [85] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [86] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [87] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [88] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [89] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [90] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [91] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [92] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [93] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [94] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [95] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [96] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [97] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [98] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [99] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [100] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [101] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [102] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [103] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [104] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [105] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [106] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [107] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [108] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [109] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [110] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [111] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [112] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [113] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [114] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [115] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [116] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [117] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [118] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [119] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [120] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [121] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [122] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [123] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [124] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [125] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [126] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [127] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [128] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [129] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [130] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [131] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [132] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [133] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [134] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [135] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [136] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [137] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [138] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [139] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [140] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [141] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [142] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [143] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [144] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [145] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [146] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [147] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [148] 7.11pm, 8.30pm, [14

THURSDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.6-99.8MHz FM)
6.30 Chris Moyles, 9.00 Simon Mayo, 12.00 Jo Whiley, 2.00 Mark Radcliffe, 4.00 Dave Pearce, 6.30 The Evening Session Priority Night, 10.30 Mary Anne Hobbs, 12.00 Gilles Peterson, 2.00 Emma B. 4.00 - 6.30 Cive Warren.

RADIO 2
(88.9-92MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy, 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan, 9.30 Ken Bruce, 12.00 Jimmy Young, 2.00 Ed Stewart, 5.05 John Dunn, 7.00 David Allen, 8.00 Paul Jones, 9.00 King of the Road, 9.30 What on Earth?, 10.00 Denise Williams, 10.30 Richard Alinson, 12.05 Steve Madden, 3.00 - 4.00 Alex Lester.

RADIO 3
(90.2-94MHz FM)

6.00 On Air.

9.00 Masterworks.

10.30 Artist of the Week.

11.00 Sound Stories.

12.00 Composer of the Week: Mendelssohn.

1.00 Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert.

2.00 The BBC Orchestras.

4.00 Ensemble See Pick of the Day.

4.45 Music Machine.

5.00 In Tune.

7.30 Performance on 3. From the dazzlingly refurbished art-deco concert hall in Budapest's Liszt Academy, Humphrey Burton introduces orchestral music by three very different Hungarian giants: Béla Bartók (Violin), Budapest Symphony Chorus (women's voices), Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra/Tamas Vassay, Bartók: Two Pictures; Ligeti: Violin Concerto.

8.20 In Memory of Liszt: Nicola Barranger visits the Ferenc Liszt Memorial Museum, opened to mark the 175th anniversary of the composer's death and situated in his Budapest home.

8.40 Concert, part 2: Liszt: Dante Symphony.

9.40 Postscript: George Szirtes takes a journey down the Danube, exploring its culture, history and life today: 4: Pest.

10.00 Music Restored: Return of the series celebrating early music, introduced by Lucy Skeaping. Emma Kirkby (soprano), Academy of Ancient Music/Andrew Manze (violin).

PICK OF THE DAY

CHARLOTTE JONES scores a notable double as writer and star of this afternoon's stylish, witty play, *Airswimming* (2.15pm R4). Set in St Dymphna's Hospital for the Criminally Insane, its inmates include the debbish Persephone (Sophie Thompson, right) and the brisk, masculine Dora (Jones), locked away for being a single mother and for smoking cigars respectively.

During daily polishing duty, they forge a powerful friendship. Jones doesn't do Twenties speak very convincingly, but the dialogue's nervous intensity lifts it above the mean. The chamber music series Ensemble (4pm R3) begins a new season with the clarinettist Emma Johnson and the flautist Gary Arbutnott playing music by Debussy, Francais and Messiaen.

ROBERT HANKE

Geminiani, after Corelli: Concerto grosso No 5 in G minor: Handel: *Piango la sorte mia* (Giulio Cesare); Vasserman, attrib Pergolesi/Ricciotti: Concerto armonico No 5 in B flat.

Geminiani, after Corelli: Concerto grosso No 6 in A: Handel: Gentle Mephistopheus, Son of Night (Alceste).

10.45 Night Waves: Jonathan Swift - ironic promoter of eating children, controversial clergymen, successful lover and failed politician - is the subject of a highly personal new study by the acclaimed biographer Victoria Glendinning.

11.30 Jazz Notes.

12.00 Proms Composer of the Week: Janacek. (R)

1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4 (92.4-94MHz FM)

6.00 Today.

9.00 Between Ourselves.

9.30 Coffee - a Heilish Brew.

9.45 Buster's Diaries.

10.00 NEWS: Women's Hour.

11.00 NEWS: From Our Own Correspondent.

11.30 Promenaders.

12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.

12.57 Weather.

1.00 The World at One.

1.30 Brain of Britain 1998.

2.00 NEWS: The Archers.

2.35 Afternoon Play: *Airswimming*. See Pick of the Day.

3.00 NEWS: Stepping Out (0171) 580 4444.

3.30 Strange Weather Days. (R)

3.45 Tales We Tell.

4.00 NEWS: Word of Mouth.

4.30 The Material World.

5.00 PM.

5.57 Weather.

6.00 Six O'Clock News.

6.30 Life, Death and Sex with Mike and Sue.

7.00 NEWS: The Archers.

7.15 Front Row: Frannie Stock investigates the life of Francis Bacon, the acclaimed painter and long-term habitué of the Colony Club, Soho, as portrayed by Derek Jacobi in a new film, *'Love Is the Devil'*.

7.45 The Jury: By Matthew Solon. A high-profile public figure is fighting a legal case to preserve her reputation.

As proceedings get under way, it becomes clear to the members of the jury that the trial will have an impact on their own lives. With Suzanne Bertish, Patrick Robinson and Kylie Hunter. Director Andy Jordan (4/25).

8.00 NEWS: Consequences.

9.00 Between Ourselves.

9.30 Coffee - a Heilish Brew.

9.45 Buster's Diaries.

10.00 NEWS: Women's Hour.

11.00 NEWS: From Our Own Correspondent.

11.30 Promenaders.

12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.

12.57 Weather.

1.00 The World at One.

1.30 Brain of Britain 1998.

2.00 NEWS: The Archers.

2.35 Afternoon Play: *Airswimming*. See Pick of the Day.

3.00 NEWS: Stepping Out (0171) 580 4444.

3.30 Strange Weather Days. (R)

3.45 Tales We Tell.

4.00 NEWS: Word of Mouth.

4.30 The Material World.

5.00 PM.



RADIO 5 LIVE

(693, 909kHz MW)

9.00 Breakfast.

9.00 Brian Hayes.

10.00 The Midday News.

1.00 Ruscoe and Co.

4.00 Drive.

7.00 News Extra.

7.30 The Thursday Match. Featuring coverage of the night's matches in the European Cup Winners Cup first round, first leg: Newcastle v Partizan Belgrade (Yugoslavia), Chelsea v Helsingborgs F (Sweden), and Hearts v Real Mallorca (Spain).

10.00 Late Night Live. With Nick Robinson. Including the day's sports round-up at 10.30, a late night news briefing at 11.00, and at 11.15 The Financial World Tonight.

1.00 Up All Night.

5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM (1000-1019MHz FM)

6.00 Nick Bailey, 8.00 Henry Kelly.

12.00 Requests, 2.00 Concerto.

3.00 Jamie Clegg, 9.30 Newlight.

7.00 Classics at Seven, 8.00 Concert.

11.00 Alan Mann, 2.00 Concert.

3.00 - 4.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO (125, 157-192MHz FM)

6.00 Chris Evans, 8.00 Russ Williams, 1.00 Nick Abbott, 4.00 Bobby Hain Book only Mark Forrest from 645, 7.30 Mark Forrest, 10.00 James Merritt, 1.00 Craig Wallace, 4.30 - 5.30 Jeremy Clark.

WORLD SERVICE (95kHz LW)

1.00 Newscast, 1.30 Westway.

1.45 Britain Today, 2.00 Newscast.

2.30 Composer of the Month, 3.00 Newsday, 3.30 Focus on Faith.

4.00 World News, 4.05 World Business Report, 4.45 Sports Roundup.

4.50 The World Today (430-700)/In sight (SW 587kHz only), 4.45 Off the Shelf - Human Croquet (SW 587kHz only), 5.55 - 6.00 Sci-ence View (SW 723kHz only).

TALK RADIO

7.00 Bill Overton and Kirsty Young, 9.00 Scott Chisholm.

11.00 Lorraine Kelly, 1.00 Anne Raeburn, 3.00 Tommy Boyd, 5.00 Peter Dealey, 7.00 Live European Cup Winners Cup Chelsea v Helsingborgs, 10.00 James Whales.

1.00 Ian Collins, 5.00 - 7.00 The Early Show with Bill Overton.

RADIO 4 LW (59kHz)

9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service, 12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines, Shipping Forecast, 5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

A STRONG trio of Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder (right) and Paul Scofield star in *The Crucible* (8pm Sky Premier), a well-received version of the Arthur Miller play, based on the Salem witch hunts in Massachusetts at the end of the 17th century. Day-Lewis and Ryder turn in their customarily solid performances in a surprisingly successful and ambitious adaptation. Singin' on the Rain (8pm TNT) is best-known for Gene Kelly's

kerb-splashing antics and the odd catchphrase - notably "Make 'em Laugh", and the title number - but there's more to it than that.

An Oscar-nominated Jean Hagen is Kelly's silent-movie partner whose squeaky voice handicaps their transition to the "talkies". Meanwhile, Men in Crisis: Stalin vs Trotsky (7.30pm History Channel), presents a rather more realistic perspective on the late 1920s.

PETER CONCHIE



ENDS (5449185), 1.00 AI Creatures Great and Small (4253388, 2.00 Dates (5815768), 2.55 The Bill (5814934), 3.25 The Bill (5814935), 3.55 Berger (685343), 4.45 EastEnders (624452), 5.30 Angels (2752194), 6.00 All Creatures Great and Small (4215219), 7.00 The Comedy Alternative: Don't Walk Up (6257727), 7.40 The Comedy Alternative: Dads Army (2794616), 8.20 Yes Minister (6298825), 9.00 Auf Wiedersehen, Pet (6438625), 10.05 Men Behaving Badly (623367), 10.45 Men Behaving Badly (642404), 11.25 Bottom (7675369), 12.05 The Bill (6761647), 12.35 The Bill (7022244), 1.05 Casualty (3977654), 2.05 Stay Lucky (7627805), 2.50 - 7.00 Shopping at Night (5757695).

LIVING (640 Tiny Living (372475), 5.00 Special Babies (8042272), 6.30 Beyond Belief, Fact or Fiction (7730009), 10.00 Jerry Springer (547727), 10.50 Roland (542588), 1.40 Brookside (310109), 12.45 John Studd (2730359), 4.45 Rescue 911 (5890005), 1.45 Ready, Steady, Cook (4072456), 1.50 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (7336000), 2.20 Living It Up (8491123), 3.20 Rolonda (5692165), 4.00 Tempest (6190307), 5.00 Ready, Steady, Cook (6172298), 5.35 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (616727), 6.40 Jerry Springer (6222298), 7.00 Rescue 911 (5776098), 7.30 Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction (5253765), 8.00 Adrenalin Junkies (2553765), 9.00 Nothing Lasts Forever (5653524), 11.00 The Sex Files (5872901), 12.00 Close.

EUROSPORT

2.30 Sailing Magazine (58476), 6.00 Rowing (58476), 7.45 Cycling: Tour of Spain (5852007), 10.04 Tractor Pulling (5852008), 11.00 Football Cup Legends (5852009), 1.30 Cricket - Britvic Assurance (7522449), 6.00 Equestrian (5822668), 3.30 Sports Centre (1615788), 3.30 Close.

SKY SPORTS 3

11.00 Cricket - Britvic Assurance (7522449), 1.00 Rugby Mundial (5822007), 1.30 Cricket - Britvic Assurance (7522449), 6.00 Equestrian (5822668), 3.30 Formula Three Racing (5816949), 6.30 Formula One Racing (

